



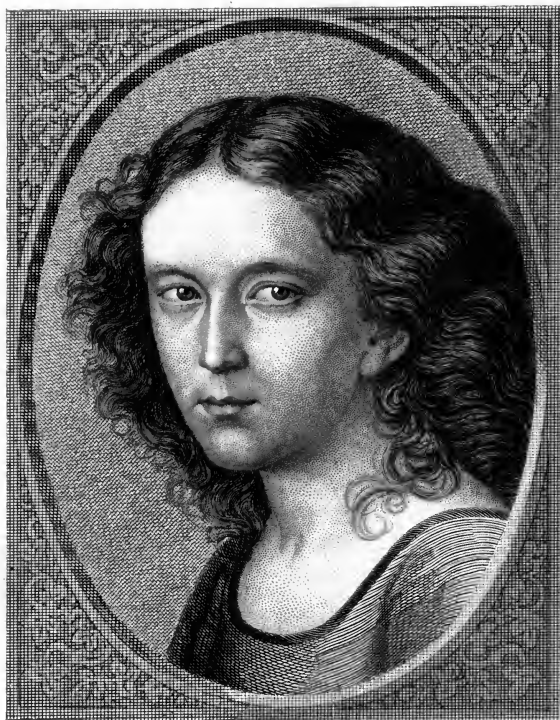




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*A. Weger, Leipzig*

*Felix - Mendelssohn - Bartholdy,  
in his 12<sup>th</sup> year.*



GOETHE

AND

MENDELSSOHN.

(1821—1831.)

TRANSLATED, WITH ADDITIONS, FROM THE GERMAN

OF

DR. KARL MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

BY

M. E. VON GLEHN.

WITH PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILE,

AND LETTERS BY MENDELSSOHN OF LATER DATE.



London :

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1872.

TO VINI  
ASSOCIATO

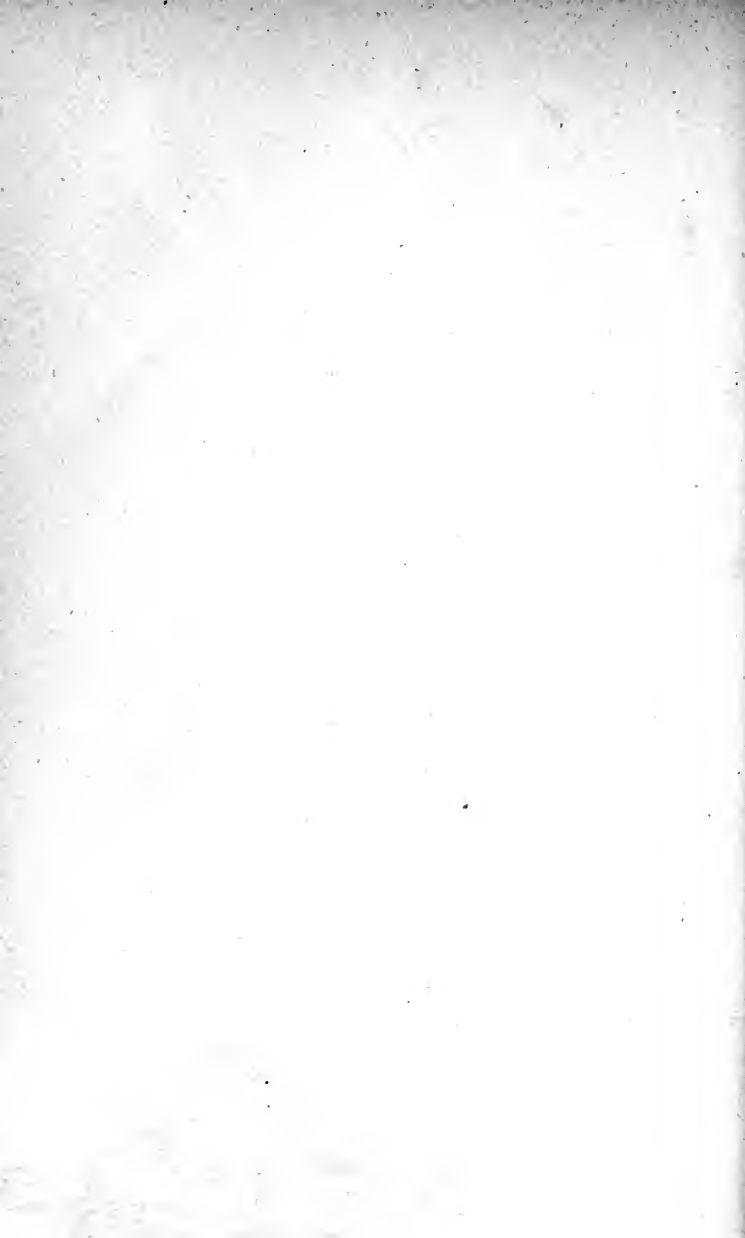
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TO  
MRS. VICTOR BENECKE,  
ELDEST DAUGHTER OF  
FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY,  
AND HIS NEAREST RELATIVE IN THIS COUNTRY,

I Dedicate

THIS LITTLE VOLUME,  
IN MEMORY OF HER FATHER,  
AND  
IN GRATITUDE FOR ALL THE HAPPINESS  
I ENJOY THROUGH HIM.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE  
TO THE  
ENGLISH EDITION.

THE following pages were written in the midst of the great events of the year 1871.

It is strange to see that even at so absorbing a time the higher life of the nation was especially directed to artistic productions.

At the meeting of the "Historical Science Society," held at Freiburg in Breisgau on the 8th of March last, to celebrate the establishment of the German Empire, I delivered a lecture on Goethe and Mendelssohn. This

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lecture I shortly afterwards repeated at Constance, and by general desire I now publish it in an extended form.

It is an episode of Weimar's golden days which we see before us—old age and fame hand in hand with youth in its aspiring efforts; the aged Poet fondling the curls of the little musician and calling to him in playful and endearing accents “to make a little noise for him, and awaken the winged spirits that have so long lain slumbering.”

The boy matures into the young man, and can now produce, as well as receive. He has to tell Goethe about Hengstenberg, and Spontini, and Hegel's “Æsthetics:” he teaches the Poet to understand Beethoven; brings before him on the piano, in chronological order, all the great composers, and shows how they

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have furthered the art. The conversation next touches on the poetic, the scientific, and the moral world: on the profound and ancient problem of human life,—which the author of “Faust” thus explains in speaking to Eckermann\* of the following passage in the fifth Act of his poem:—

“Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,  
Den können wir erlösen” —

“The key to Faust’s deliverance is contained in these lines; in Faust himself there is a spirit of energy which grows ever nobler and purer to the end; whilst everlasting love sustains him from on high. This is in perfect harmony with our religious conceptions, for it is not by our own efforts alone that we are saved, but by the help of divine grace.”

\* Conversation of June 6th, 1831.

Too soon did it pass away, that artist-life which in its early dawn had so delighted Goethe. What the Poet said of the restless and self-consuming energy of his friend Schiller, became prophetic for Mendelssohn. Of the composer of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Elijah," one might also say: "There was something terrific in his progress; he went forward unceasingly till his thirty-eighth year,—and then came the end!"

But Mendelssohn's life, short as it was, may be considered rich and happy, if true happiness lies in making others happy, and in obtaining the recognition which is due to untiring zeal and activity. Where else could his energy have met with such enthusiastic acknowledgment, or his music with so sympathetic a reception, as in the country which, since



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Handel's time, has always shown how true artists should be honoured? How happy and how completely at his ease he felt in England, how deeply sensible of the homage paid to him there as a man and as an artist, he never failed to acknowledge.

The publication of the accompanying letters from my father to Mr. Macfarren and Sir W. Sterndale Bennett—English artists of congenial mind with his own—as well as of the account of his visit to Buckingham Palace, will serve to recall to the memory of many the master whom Prince Albert, after the first performance of the “Elijah,” addressed as “the noble artist who, though encompassed by the Baal-worship of false art, has by his genius and industry succeeded, like a second Elijah, in preserving the faithful worship of true art,

and out of the confusion of senseless and trivial music has once more attuned our ears to the pure music of imitative and regulated harmony; — the great master who, in the tranquil current of his thoughts, reveals to us the still small voice no less than the mighty strife of the elements.”

KARL MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

FREIBURG IM BREISGAU,

*March 2, 1872.*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I NEED hardly express the great pleasure which it gives me to be the means of introducing this little volume to English readers. Any new facts in the life of the great musician of our times must be heartily welcomed by all who knew and loved him when he was among us, or who, like myself, have since learned to know and love him through his music and letters. Especially is this the case when the facts are not only new but highly characteristic, and given for the most part in his own fresh and lively style.

But beside the new details about Mendelssohn, the following pages have yet another interest, introducing us as they do to the greatest of German poets under a new aspect,—that of his interest in and love for music. No doubt it was Mendelssohn's charming personality and winning ways which first attracted Goethe, but it is evident that he loved music for its own sake also, and that in the wide embrace of his universal mind it had its true place, with all the other arts and sciences which he loved and studied with so much ardour and method.

The shortcomings in my version will, I trust, be attributed, not to any want of desire to do justice to the subject, but to the inherent difficulties of the task of translation — difficulties which those only who have attempted it can

enter into. In historical or scientific works, where matter, and not manner, is the chief point to be kept in sight, the task is comparatively easy; but in the case of letters or conversations, where the aim is a faithful representation of individual style, it is well-nigh hopeless; the phrases must often sound odd and unnatural, each language having its own peculiar expressions, colloquialisms, and idioms, which frequently have no equivalents in another language; and this because in one nation, thoughts and feelings will constantly be given utterance to, which in another are totally unnatural and perhaps never expressed. Thus, not only the words, but also the thoughts and ideas of the original are often stumbling-blocks in one's way.

I gladly take this opportunity of expressing

my thanks to Mrs. Victor Benecke and Mr. George Grove for their great kindness in revising the proofs of the translation, and for their advice and assistance throughout my work. Also to Madame Preusser, Sir William Sterndale Bennett, Mr. Macfarren, Mr. Novello and others, for their permission to insert the letters addressed to them, or in their possession, and included in the Appendix.

M. E. VON GLEHN.

SYDENHAM, *May 24th*, 1872.

THE Engraving in the frontispiece represents Felix Mendelssohn in his twelfth year. It is from a chalk drawing by William Hensel, from the original portrait in oils painted by Begas in the year 1821.

The sketch at page 16—now first made public—is a fac-simile of a pencil drawing taken in 1820 or 1821, and now in the possession of the Hensel family. The signature at the foot of this sketch is that to the “Waldteufel” letter (page 30).

Goethe’s signature on the cover is from the original of the lines given on page 34. The fragment of the B minor Quartett is imitated from the autograph; and the signature below, with the flourish, is slightly reduced from an autograph in one of the earliest volumes of Mendelssohn’s manuscript boyish compositions.

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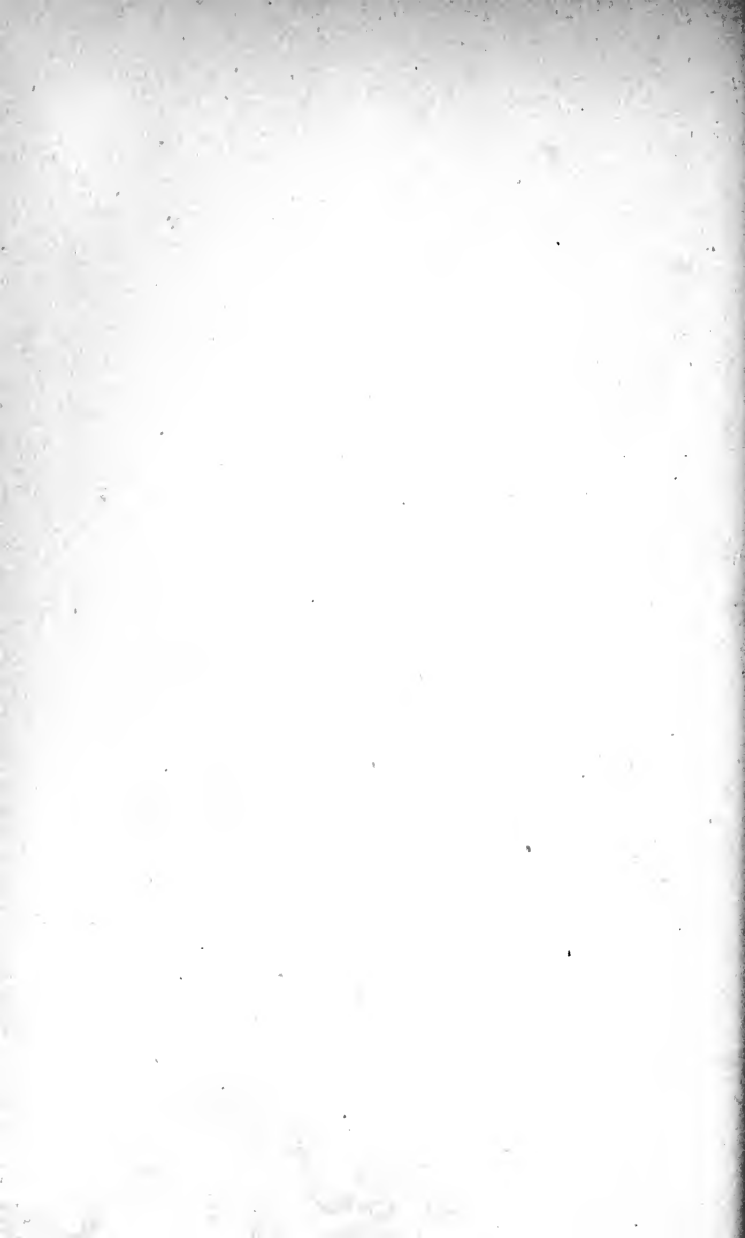
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GOETHE  
AND  
MENDELSSOHN.



GOETHE  
AND  
MENDELSSOHN.

MOST young people need some outlet for their inborn impulses of hero-worship and affection. It is fortunate for them when their enthusiasm is inspired by a true and noble ideal; when their minds can gain force and elevation from the examples of great men, rising like constellations above the horizon of their own time.

The opportunities which Felix Mendelssohn enjoyed as a boy, of seeing and knowing Goethe in his own house, gave an impulse to his whole life. Goethe's living presence strengthened and fostered that love for perfection, and that dislike for everything mean and morbid, which always distinguished him.

The meeting was brought about by Zelter, an original in every sense of the word. Whatever Zelter did, he did by himself alone. We know from his autobiography\* that though forced by his father to work at the mason's trade, yet, both as apprentice and journeyman, he pursued music unceasingly till he had thoroughly acquired the art, never allowing himself to be discouraged by the depreciatory remarks of professional musicians, such as Kirnberger, who told him to his face that "while an ordinary workman is always respectable, there is nothing more pitiable than an ordinary artist, such as you will be."

Like most autocrats, Zelter had a very positive and rough manner of his own, and his plain speaking and rudeness were proverbial among the artists of Berlin. There was some-

\* Carl Friedrich Zelter, eine Lebensbeschreibung. Nach autobiographischen Manuscripten bearbeitet von Dr. Wilhelm Rintel. Berlin, 1861.

thing rigid, stubborn, and rough-hewn about him, a native force which nothing but the wonderfully harmonious personality of Goethe could have softened. From the moment of his reading "Werther" he was filled with a deep sympathy and attraction for the man whose knowledge of human nature had enabled him to give such a work to the world; and after he had become personally acquainted with him there was no one who clung with truer devotion to Goethe. The correspondence between the two is a lasting memorial of the union of characteristic force and true friendship.

Zelter speaks of the artistic efforts of the Berliners, describes the progress of the "Sing-Akademie," and at an early period in the correspondence draws the attention of the great art-patron at Weimar to Felix Mendelssohn, the most gifted of his pupils.

In a letter of the 26th October, 1821, he thus announces to his friend his proposed visit

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to Weimar: "I want to show your face to my Doris, and my best pupil, before I leave the world, though I certainly mean to hold out in it as long as possible. The boy is good and pretty, lively and obedient."

Felix was then only twelve years old, but for that age he had already displayed extraordinary musical productivity. He had written two operas, and nearly finished a third; had composed for the Sing-Akademie a Psalm in four and five parts with a grand double fugue; as well as six symphonies, a quartett for piano and strings, a cantata, six fugues for pianoforte, and a number of studies, sonatas, and songs.

"Just fancy," says his mother, writing to her sister-in-law, Henriette Mendelssohn, in Paris, "that the little wretch is to have the good luck of going to Weimar with Zelter for a short time. He wants to show him to Goethe, and is to take him there next week after they have been to the exhibition of Schadow's picture of



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Luther at Wittenberg. You can imagine what it costs me to part from the dear child, even for a few weeks. But I consider it such an advantage for him to be introduced to Goethe, to live under the same roof with him, and enjoy the blessing of so great a man. I am also glad of this little journey as a change for him; for his impulsiveness sometimes makes him work harder than he ought to at his age."

It may easily be understood how much the boy was exhorted to make the most of the rare opportunity thus afforded him. "Keep your wits about you," writes his father. "Every time I write to you, my dear boy, I shall remind you to keep a strict watch over yourself; to sit properly and behave nicely, especially at dinner; to speak distinctly and suitably, and try as much as possible to express yourself to the point. I know what a good fellow you are, and therefore think it hardly necessary to remind you to be good and modest, and

obedient to your fatherly friend and guide, and not to forget often to think affectionately of us."

His mother writes: "If I could but be a little mouse so as to watch my dear Felix while he's away, and see how he comports himself as an independent youth. Mind you snap up every word that Goethe says: I want to know all about him."

Nor could his elder sister, Fanny, resist adding her exhortations: "When you are with Goethe, I advise you to open your eyes and ears wide; and after you come home, if you can't repeat every word that fell from his mouth, I will have nothing more to do with you. It's better for us to lose you for a little, that during that time you may lay up the most precious recollections for your future life."

The reports which the young traveller sent home to these anxious monitors exhibit a peculiar mixture of observation with the happy

ingenuousness of a child. He describes the beautiful arrangement of Goethe's house; the pleasant "Salve" which greeted him on the threshold of the door leading to the chief apartment; the statues on the steps and in the lobby, which suggested Greece, the dreamland of the poet. No doubt the boy's heart beat as he trod the sacred threshold.

"Now, stop and listen, all of you," he writes on the 6th November. "To-day is Tuesday. On Sunday, the sun of Weimar—Goethe—arrived. In the morning we went to church, and they gave us half of Handel's 100th Psalm. (The organ is large, but weak; the Marien-organ,\* small as it is, is much more powerful. This one has 50 stops.)

"Afterwards I went to the 'Elephant,' where I sketched the house of Lucas Cranach. Two hours afterwards Professor Zelter came and said, 'Goethe has come,—the old gentleman's come!'

\* The organ of the Marien-Kirche at Berlin.

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and in a minute we were down the steps and in Goethe's house. He was in the garden, and was just coming round a corner. Isn't it strange, dear father? that was exactly how you met him. He is very kind, but I don't think any of the pictures are like him.

“He was looking over his collection of petrifactions, which his son had arranged for him, and kept saying, ‘Hm, hm! I am very much pleased.’ After that I stayed in the garden with him and Professor Zelter for half an hour. Then came dinner. One would never take him for seventy-three, but for fifty. After dinner Fräulein Ulrike, the sister of Frau von Goethe, asked for a kiss, and I did the same. Every morning I get a kiss from the author of ‘Faust’ and ‘Werther,’ and every afternoon two kisses from my friend and father Goethe. Think of that! (In Leipsic I went several times through Auerbach's curious courtyard, a great passage, like many others in Leipsic, filled with shops

and people, and shut in by houses six or seven stories high. On the market-place there is actually one of nine stories.)

“But where am I wandering to! After dinner I played to Goethe for two hours and more, partly Bach fugues, and partly extempore. In the evening they played whist, and Professor Zelter, who played with them at first, said, ‘Whist means that you are to hold your tongue!’ What a good saying! We had supper all together, even Goethe too, though generally he never eats anything in the evening. Now, my dear coughing Fanny!\* yesterday morning I took your songs to Frau von Goethe, who has a pretty voice. She is going to sing them to the old gentleman. I told him that you had written some, and asked if he would hear them. He said, ‘Yes, yes, very willingly.’ Frau von Goethe liked them very

\* This probably refers to a supposed habit of Fanny Mendelssohn's, of criticising her brother's compositions by coughing. After telling her of the honour and kindness shown him, he thus jokingly challenges her disapproval.

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much, which is a good omen. He is to hear them to-day or to-morrow. I am so sorry that I shall not see Lipinski again."

It is easy to see that Felix soon got over the constraint of the first acquaintance, and made himself at home in the house of the man whom others approached with the greatest deference.

The descriptions which Goethe's contemporaries give of his appearance—the solemn, slow gait, the powerful features, the lofty brow on which Apollo had set his seal of strength and wisdom, the abundant grey hair, the deep voice and measured speech, all convey an impression of stately dignity. Even Zelter, who usually despised all outward forms, used to appear at Goethe's in the fullest dress; that is to say, short black silk breeches, silk stockings, and shoes with great silver buckles, a costume long out of fashion, and supposed to bear the stamp of peculiar solemnity. Goethe himself ad-

mitted that he reserved a certain indifference of manner for strangers who came to visit him, and it is well known how cold and repelling he was to Carl Maria von Weber. But for the "little Berliner" he laid aside all his ministerial dignity, and stroked and patted his head with such fatherly tenderness, that the boy soon lost all bashfulness, and gave way to his tremendous spirits in all their youthful freshness. It was evident that Goethe felt quite as much personal attraction for the boy as interest in his music. At the first party which Goethe gave for the Berliners, he amused himself with making a trial of Felix's talent before all the company. "My friend Zelter," he said to Rellstab,\* "has brought his little pupil to see me; we are to have a trial of his musical powers, but he is extraordinarily talented in other ways as well. You know the doctrine of tempera-

\* See Rellstab's *Aus meinem Leben*, Berlin, 1861, vol. ii. chapter 11.—"Mendelssohn im Goetheschen Haus."

ments; everyone has all the four in him, only in different proportions. Well, this boy, I should say, possesses the smallest possible modicum of the phlegmatic, and the maximum of the opposite quality."

The first test to which Goethe put the young artist was to make him improvise on a theme furnished by Zelter. Zelter sat down to the piano, and with his stiff, cramped fingers played a very simple tune in triplets, "Ich träumte einst von Hännchen," as tame and trivial an air as need be. Felix played it through after him, and the next minute went off into the wildest allegro, transforming the simple melody into a passionate figure, which he took now in the bass, now in the upper part, weaving all manner of new and beautiful thoughts into it in the boldest style. Everybody was in astonishment, as the small childish fingers worked away at the great chords, mastering the most difficult combinations, and evolving the



most surprising contrapuntal passages out of a stream of harmonies, though certainly without paying much regard to the melody.

It was one of Zelter's principles to be very chary of praise; his aim being to save his pupil from conceit and over-estimation of his own powers — "those cursed enemies of all artistic progress," as he called them. No sooner therefore had Felix finished than he said, in a tone of the most complete indifference, like an old pedagogue bent on spoiling the boy's brilliant success, "What hobgoblins and dragons have you been dreaming about, to drive you along in that helter-skelter fashion!"

Goethe saw his object, and taking the head of the little artist in his two hands, and caressing it, said in a playful way: "But you won't get off with that; you must play more before we can quite believe in you." So Felix had to play Bach fugues, of which Goethe was particularly fond; then he asked

for a minuet, upon which the boy cried out with flashing eyes, "Shall I play you the most beautiful one in the whole world?" and played the Minuet from Don Juan.

Goethe stood by the piano listening attentively, and his eyes sparkling with pleasure. After the Minuet he asked for the Overture, but this the little player refused on the spot, declaring, "It can't be played as it is written, and it wouldn't be right to alter it in the least." He offered, however, to play the Overture to Figaro instead, and acquitted himself of the task with so much confidence and ease, rendering the orchestral effects so completely, bringing out so many delicate touches in the instrumentation by his manner of playing, and giving each part its due prominence, that the effect was overpowering. Goethe became more and more genial and lively, and tried all sorts of tricks and jokes on his little guest.

“So far,” said he, “you have only played me what you knew before ; now we will see if you can play something that you don’t know.” He went out, and returned with a number of sheets of written music. “Here,” said he, “are some things out of my collection of manuscripts. Now we will put you to the test ; see if you can play that :” and he placed on the desk a sheet of music, in clear but very small writing. It was an autograph of Mozart’s. The boy solved the task as readily as if he had known the piece by heart for years. “That’s nothing,” said Goethe, as everybody was applauding loudly ; “other people can read that too ; but now I am going to give you something in which you will break down. So take care !” And with this joking threat he got out another manuscript and put it on the desk. This one did indeed look strange. It was difficult to say whether it was music at all, or merely a sheet of ruled paper bespattered with ink and smudged all over. Felix burst out laughing, and exclaimed,

“What writing! how is it possible to read that?” But suddenly he became serious; for when Goethe asked, “Now guess *who* wrote that!” Zelter, looking over the boy’s shoulder as he sat at the piano, called out: “Why, it’s Beethoven’s writing;\* one can see that a mile off. He always writes as if he used a broomstick, and then wiped his sleeve over the wet ink. I have several manuscripts of his; they are soon recognized.”

Felix kept his eyes reverently fixed on the paper; and his whole face glowed with excitement, as out of the chaos of words and notes, scratched out, smudged, interlined, and written over one another, he brought to light some lofty thought of beauty, or some deep noble senti-

\* Goethe had made acquaintance with Beethoven at Töplitz, but had not learned to appreciate his “uncontrolled personality.” “His talent excited my astonishment, but unfortunately his personality is entirely uncontrolled; he is perfectly welcome to think the world detestable, but by that means he does not make it more enjoyable for himself or for others.” (Letter to Zelter, Carlsbad, Sept. 2, 1812.)

Handwritten text at the top of the page, possibly a title or reference number, consisting of several lines of small, illegible characters.



*J. M. Knauth & Co.*



ment. But Goethe, anxious to make the test a really severe one, left him no time to consider, but kept urging him on:—"You see, didn't I tell you that you would break down? Now try, and show what you can do." Felix began to play at once. It was a simple song, but to distinguish the right notes, among those that had been scratched out and half smeared out, required a rare quickness and sharpness of perception. At the first reading Felix had often to point laughingly with his finger to the right note which was to be found in quite another place; and many a mistake had to be corrected with a hurried "No, that's it." But at the end he said, "Now I will play it to you," and the second time there was not a single wrong note. "That's Beethoven," he exclaimed once as he came upon a phrase which seemed to him to bear the stamp of the composer's individuality; "that is quite Beethoven: I should have known him by that." With this trial Goethe let him off. He concealed his praise under

pleasant banter—"Here you broke down, you know, and here you were not safe;" but it was easy to see what a keen artistic pleasure he took in the boy's triumph.

A day or two after, when the youthful composer's first quartett\* had been performed, and Felix himself, after playing the pianoforte part, had run off into the garden, Goethe remarked to the other players:† "Musical prodigies, as far as mere technical execution goes, are probably no longer so rare: but what this little man can do in extemporizing and playing at sight, borders on the miraculous, and I could not have believed it possible at so early an age."

"And yet you heard Mozart in his seventh year at Frankfort?" said Zelter.

"Yes," answered Goethe; "at that time I myself

\* In B minor, Op. 3. Afterwards dedicated to Goethe. See page 54.

† See Prof. Lobe's Reminiscences in the *Gartenlaube* for 1867, No. 1. Also, by the same, *Consonanzen und Dissonanzen*; Leipsic, 1869.



had only just reached my twelfth year, and was certainly, like all the rest of the world, immensely astonished at his extraordinary execution; but what your pupil already accomplishes, bears the same relation to the Mozart of that time, that the cultivated talk of a grown-up person does to the prattle of a child."

The conversation turned upon the young artist's talent for composition. The musicians hoped that as Felix's ideas were more independent than those of Mozart at the same age, a most brilliant future might be predicted for him.

"May it be so," said Goethe. "But who can tell in what manner a mind may ultimately unfold itself? One sees so much talent, full of the highest promise, take a false direction, and disappoint the most sanguine expectations! However, from this fate our young genius will be preserved by the master whom good fortune has provided him with in Zelter."

Zelter would not let these words pass unques-

tioned. "True," he observed; "I feel my responsibility about the boy, and besides his own voluntary work I keep him seriously to the point with severe studies in counterpoint, but it will not be long before he escapes from my discipline. Even now he has learned almost everything that is essential; and once free, it will then first be seen what his actual bent will be."

"Yes, and above all," remarked Goethe, "the influence of a teacher is always problematical. That which constitutes the real greatness and individuality of an artist, must be produced out of himself alone. To what teachers did Rafaele, Michel Angelo, Haydn, Mozart, and all the great masters owe their immortal creations?"

With all his fatherly tenderness for the "little Berliner" one sees how free from bias the poet was in his judgment of him. He specially inquired of Zelter how Felix was educated at Berlin, and whether, according to Berlin fashion,

he was not too much coddled. He did not like to see so much fuss made with the boy by all the company. He forbade him to go over to Jena for a concert which had been got up by the students there; in fact, he was no great friend to concerts or music in a general way; and once at court, when a pianoforte player was in the middle of a very long sonata, he got up, and, to the horror of all the throng of court ladies and gentlemen, said, "If it lasts three minutes longer, I confess everything."

During his stay at Weimar, Felix played much more than usual, often from six to eight hours a day; he played before the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Russia, and the Princesses; he even had the "audacity," as he writes to his mother, to improvise before all the court, and in presence of Hummel. His G minor sonata\* was very much praised by both

\* Begun "18th June, 1820;" finished "18th August, 1821."  
Recently published as Opus 105.—*Trans.*

the Grand Duke and Hummel. The chief lady-in-waiting of the Grand Duchess began to make a drawing of him, and the ladies were all so absurd about him that Goethe complained to Zelter, "These women here are doing all they can to spoil the boy for me." But one day, when Felix had been ordered to play at court, he was kept outside in the antechamber of the Belvedere; the servants would not let him pass: so at last, instead of playing, he went off to Weimar in a pet, and left the court to wait for him. For which he doubtless underwent a paternal lecture from the Herr Geheimrath.

The little Berliner had in a short time become the favourite of the whole Goethe family. Often when sitting at the piano, weaving into one long fantasia all manner of favourite airs, such as "Treibt der Champagner," Eberwein's songs, Körner's "Treuen Tod," the Triangle Waltz (in that Philhellenic

time of course called the "Ipsilantiwalzer"), he would jump up in the middle to have a good chase round the room with the younger ladies. Once he teased one of the ladies-in-waiting with a bellows, which he had picked up somewhere near the fireplace, and maliciously directed at her curls—and yet no one was ever angry with him. "If you think I am little Zaches," he writes to his sister Fanny at Berlin, "then Doris must be Rosabelverde, for it is she that curbs me, ungovernable steed that I am."

It was impossible at Weimar to escape the atmosphere of poetry, and so round-games of rhymes formed part of the day's amusements; Felix and the ladies had many a contest over *bouts rimés*, often ending with a noisy appeal to the great master himself to arbitrate on their doggrel. Goethe entered heartily into the uproarious spirits of the young people, and was very loth to let the Berliners go; and when at

the end of a fortnight Zelter began to talk of going home, he seriously reprimanded him.

“Every afternoon,” says Felix, “Goethe opens the Streicher piano\* with these words, ‘I have not heard you at all to-day, so you must make a little noise for me.’ Then he sits down by me, and when I have finished (generally improvising) I beg for a kiss, or else I take one. You can have no conception of his goodness and kindness, nor of the quantity of minerals, busts, engravings, statuettes, and large drawings which this Pole-star of poets has in his possession. That he has an imposing figure, I cannot see; he is really not much bigger than my father. But his look, his language, his name, they are imposing. His voice has an enormous

\* “By the thoughtful care of our long-trying friend, Hofrath Rochlitz, a most carefully tested Streicher piano arrived from Leipsic; very fortunately; for soon afterwards Zelter brought us his astonishing and remarkable pupil Felix Mendelssohn, with whose marvellous talent we should never have become acquainted, without the help of such a ‘Mechanik.’”—*Tag und Jahreshefte*.

sound in it, and he can shout like ten thousand fighting men. His hair is not yet white, his walk is steady, and his manner of speaking gentle.

“Zelter wanted to go to Jena on Tuesday, and from there on to Leipsic. On Saturday, Adèle Schopenhauer came to us, and, contrary to his custom, Goethe stayed the whole evening. The conversation turned upon our departure, and Adèle proposed that we should all go and throw ourselves at Professor Zelter’s feet and implore for a few days’ grace. He was dragged into the room, and then Goethe burst out with his thundering voice, scolded Professor Zelter for wanting to take us away to the old nest, commanded him to be silent, to obey without a word, to leave me here, to go to Jena alone and then come back—in fact he so completely drove him into a corner that he will do everything that Goethe wishes. After this Goethe was assailed by everybody with kisses

on his mouth and hands, and whoever could not reach these, stroked and kissed his shoulders; if he had not been at home, I think we should have taken him to his house, as the Roman people did Cicero after the first Catiline oration. Fräulein Ulrike also had thrown herself upon his neck, and as he is making love to her, and she is very pretty, the effect of the whole was capital."

So it was decided to lengthen the visit, and to go on making music, writing verses, and enjoying happy days.

"When Goethe says to me, 'My little one, to-morrow there is a party, and you must play for us,' how can I possibly say No? Goethe has heard 'Ach wer bringt die schönen Tage,' and said to me, 'I say, that is a very pretty song.'"\*

\* Letter of the 14th November to his parents. The allusion is to Fanny Mendelssohn's setting of this poem, hitherto unpublished, and not to be confounded with my father's later well-known composition (Op. 99, No. 1).



Felix had told him that his sister Fanny wanted some words to set to music; so one day Goethe came with a poem written expressly for her, saying to Zelter, as he handed it to him, "Give this to the dear child." It ran thus :

## AN DIE ENTFERNTÉ.

Wenn ich mir in stiller Seele  
Singe leise Lieder vor :  
Wie ich fühle, dass sie fehle,  
Die ich einzig auserkor.  
Möcht ich hoffen, dass sie sänge  
Was ich ihr so gern vertraut ;  
Ach ! aus dieser Brust und Enge  
Drängen frohe Lieder laut.\*

When in silence of the soul,  
Softly to myself I sing,  
How I miss her whom my whole  
Heart hath set o'er everything !  
Would she sing what in her ear  
My full heart would fain be telling,  
From this breast, so vainly swelling,  
Songs would break forth glad and clear.

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\* Goethe's autograph is now in the possession of Fanny's son Sebastian Hensel, to whom I am indebted for the above.

However, with all her veneration for the manuscript, Fanny never attempted to compose it.

It is characteristic of the boy that though only twelve, and full of reverence for the great poet, he should never have allowed his judgment to be biassed. Of Mdlle. Szymanowska, a Polish pianoforte player, whom Goethe used to praise enthusiastically, he writes: "People set the Szymanowska above Hummel. They have confused her pretty face with her not-pretty playing." When he had to dine with Goethe's friend Riemer, he said it gave him "quite a Greek feeling;" and he described the great lexicographer with due respect as follows: "He seems to thrive on the making of Lexicons. He is stout and fat, and as shiny as a priest or a full moon." If Goethe had heard these and similar expressions of his little Berlin guest, they would no doubt have confirmed his opinion of the Berliners, which he himself thus pronounced to Eckermann: "From all that I see,

I gather that the Berliners as a class are such a forward set, that delicacy is thrown away on them; one must have one's eyes wide open and be even a little rude to keep above water."\* At dessert he gave his young friend as a parting gift a little red box, which Felix, to his delight, found to contain a silver medal with the portrait of the poet by Borry.

When the young traveller returned to Berlin, after all these impressions and excitements, he seemed ten times more lively than ever. "The first day," writes his mother, "he was really like a volcano, quite bursting with fun and spirits. Zelter had charged him to speak slowly and distinctly, but you can fancy how such an injunction would act on his tremendous excitability. Their absence grew from a fortnight to four weeks, of which the sixteen days that he spent in Goethe's house will always be memorable to him. Zelter and Doris

\* Conversation of 4th December, 1823.

could not talk enough about the sensation he created in Weimar.”

The approach of Christmas gave Felix the opportunity of recalling himself to the memory of his Weimar friends in an amusing way. At Ottilie's wish he sent his playfellows Wolf and Walter a kind of rattle (called in Germany a *Waldteufel*—that is, a Wood-spirit), a favourite toy of the Berlin street-boys; and he accompanied his present with the following letter:—

“A ‘WALDTEUFEL.’\* ”

“Here is the ‘Waldteufel.’ You command—and it is done. Will you be so good as to give it to my dear little playfellow as a small Christmas present. But I rather advise you to taboo this droning little brute, for the sound of him in a room is most excruciating; out of

\* Communicated by Professor Nohl from the original in the Hofbibliothek at Carlsruhe.

doors, at the Berlin Christmas fair, where you see and hear the noisy things by hundreds, the clatter is more bearable. I do so wish (out of pure selfishness) you were here, and could see it all with your own eyes. Walter would be delighted with the fair, the lights, the toys, and the racket, and hubbub, and din, and screaming, of the 'Waldteufel' and the children. And if the Herr Kammerrath wants to be sickened of the famous Ypsilanti, he had better come to Berlin and go to the fair, where one can hear it, with or without variations. But to him the best part of all the fun would be the happy faces wherever you go, both of givers and receivers.

"You would enjoy the fair this year, for it is most splendid, and up to to-day, the 20th of December, we have not had more than one degree of frost.

"So much for the Berlin Christmas fair.

"Volti Subito.

*“What is all Weimar about?”*

*“What an important question!”*

“It was my father’s birthday on the 11th. We gave him as much as we could. All our friends gave him presents. But one present, of course, surpassed all the rest. The Herr Geheimrath’s letter arrived on that day. As to his sometimes in the afternoons making a little motion with his head, I can hardly flatter myself; it would be far too great an honour for my strumming, and good as he is, I can scarcely believe it. Do you think I might venture to remind him of the leaf he promised for my book?”

“A thousand greetings to Miss Adèle.\* We

\* Adèle Schopenhauer had a wonderful talent for cutting out paper. She had made a “Jacob’s ladder” for Felix; that is to say, she cut out in black paper two staves of music with angels floating up and down them. Beneath the ladder thus formed there were clouds, and beneath these a sleeping figure, with its face turned upwards. The whole was mounted on pink paper, and on the back was written: “Jacob, in his dream, saw a ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending

all look forward to the witches-broom\* as much as to Christmas-eve, if I may make use of this stale and unpoetical simile. Everybody who comes here has to see the 'Ladder' † (and consequently admire it, and consequently envy me). Varnhagen saw it the other day, and was rather taken aback by it. However, in a few days he brought my sister one, which is to be a *pendant* to yours. It is very delicate, like everything that he cuts out, but in the grouping, and more especially the idea, it is far, far behind yours.

and descending on it; the ladder is still standing upon earth, and the ascending and descending angels are the notes which carry the sounds up to heaven." Varnhagen possessed the same talent as Adèle, and was incited by her masterpiece to cut out a basket of flowers with fairies hovering around it, for Fanny Mendelssohn.

\* Another of Adèle Schopenhauer's *silhouettes*,—described on page 34.

† To understand the point of the allusion to the Jacob's ladder, it may be well to explain that the German for the Scale is "Tonleiter," literally a "ladder of sound."—*Trans.*

“Please remember me to Herr and Madame Eberwein, and give my love to the Wolf.

“Your faithful

“F. MENDELSSOHN.”

The promised leaf for the album was not long in arriving. Adèle Schopenhauer and Goethe united to give their little Berlin friend a pleasant surprise. Adèle had cut out in her best style, in pink paper, a winged hobby-horse in the shape of a witches-broom, bestridden by a little elf, crowned and decked with flowers; and underneath, Goethe had written the following lines in the most formal hand:—

“Wenn über die ernste Partitur  
 Quer Steckenpferdchen reiten,  
 Nur zu auf weiter Töne Flur,  
 Wirst Manchem Lust bereiten,  
 Wie du's gethan mit Lieb' und Glück.  
 Wir wünschen Dich allesammt zurück.

GOETHE.

WEIMAR, *den 20ten Januar, 1822.*”

When up the score and down again  
 Small hobby-horses ride,



Away o'er music's wide domain  
Fresh pleasure you'll provide,  
As you have done with loving gain.  
We all here wish you back again.

In the autograph of the above, the signature "Goethe" alone is in a bold free hand. With Psyche's hobby-horse there is a second *silhouette* by Adèle—a figure elaborately got up, in dress-coat, shirt-frill, and knee-breeches, hat in hand, making a solemn low bow: the profile is Goethe's, and on the back of his neck is perched a little winged genius, with hands out, strumming upon his head. The two *silhouettes*, with the autograph of the verses and the "Jacob's ladder," are still in my father's album, together with the autograph of the lines, "Zwar die vier und zwanzig Ritter," as far as "besonders aber eine, welche wir zu segnen kamen," and the manuscript (referred to below) from the second part of Faust: also a pen-and-ink sketch by Goethe, representing a Greek temple, with a figure holding a lyre descending

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the steps. The temple recalls the singular building which he erected in the park at Weimar. Close by is the open sea, with the peaks of an island rising in the distance. On the grass before the temple is a Greek woman in deep meditation.

The old poet's interest in the young musician continued without abatement. He writes to Zelter on the 5th of February, 1822: "Say something nice to Felix from me, and also to his parents. Since your departure my piano remains dumb; a single attempt to awaken it almost turned out a failure."

In the autumn of 1822 Felix repeated his visit, this time in company with his sister Fanny and his parents, who thus had the pleasure of seeing with their own eyes how quickly and how surely their son had won the hearts of all.

"In the Goethes and Schopenhauers we have made the most delightful and never-to-be-

forgotten acquaintances," writes his mother. "With a true mother's pleasure I saw how immensely beloved Felix had made himself amongst these superior people, and his happy parents are proud to owe to him the wonderful kindness with which they were received. Goethe, the distinguished, exalted Minister, around whose head dignity, renown, poetic fame, genius, and distinction of every kind form a dazzling crown of glory, and before whom common mortals tremble, is so sweet and kind-hearted and so like a father to the boy, that it is only with the deepest gratitude and most joyful emotion that I can recall these delightful times. He talked for hours with my husband about Felix, and earnestly begged to have him again for a still longer visit; his eyes dwelt on him with evident satisfaction, and his gravity was turned into gaiety when he had been improvising to his satisfaction. As he does not care for ordinary music, his piano had

remained untouched during Felix's absence, but as he opened it for him he said, 'Come and awaken for me all the winged \* spirits which have so long been slumbering here.' And another time: 'You are my David, and if I am ever ill and sad, you must banish my bad dreams by your playing; I shall never throw my spear at you, as Saul did.' Isn't that too touching from an old man of seventy-three? Felix, who in a general way seems rather indifferent to praise, is, with good reason, proud of the favour which Goethe shows him, and this feeling can only elevate and improve him. He was also very friendly and condescending to Fanny; she had to play a good deal of Bach to him, and he was extremely pleased with those of his songs which she had composed; in fact, it is always a great delight to him to see his things set to music."

\* "Geflügelte Geister." There is a play in the words here which cannot well be rendered into English, "Flügel" being the German word for a piano as well as for a wing.—*Trans.*

In the succeeding years also, Zelter had the satisfaction of being able to make gratifying reports to Goethe of Felix's progress. "My Felix," he writes on the 11th of March, 1823, "has entered upon his fifteenth year. He grows under my very eyes. His wonderful pianoforte playing I may consider as quite a thing apart. He might also become a great violin player. The second act of his fourth opera is finished. In everything he gains, and even force and power are now hardly wanting; everything comes from within him, and the external things of the day only affect him externally. Imagine my joy, if we survive, to see the boy living in the fulfilment of all that his childhood gives promise of!"

"Yesterday," he reports on the 8th of February, 1824, "we gave a complete performance, with dialogue, of Felix's fourth opera.\* There are

\* The fourth opera was "Die beiden Neffen, oder Der Onkel aus Boston. Oper in 3 Acten"—still in manuscript.

three acts and two ballets, filling up about an hour and a half. The work met with a very favourable reception. I cannot get over my astonishment at the enormous strides which this boy of fifteen makes. Novelty, beauty, individuality, originality, all alike are to be found in him,—genius, fluency, repose, harmony, completeness, dramatic power, and the solidity of an experienced hand. His instrumentation is interesting; not overpowering or fatiguing, and yet not mere accompaniment. The musicians like playing his music, and yet it is not exactly easy. Now and then a familiar idea comes and passes on again, not as if borrowed, but, on the contrary, fit and proper for its place. Gaiety, spirit without flurry, tenderness, finish, love, passion, and innocence.—The Overture is a singular thing. Imagine a painter flinging a dab of colour on his canvas and then working it about with fingers and brushes till at last a group emerges, and you look at it with fresh wonder;

and only see that it must be true because there it is. No doubt I am talking like an old grandfather bent on spoiling his grandchild. But I know what I say, and say nothing which I can't prove. And my first proof is public approval, especially that of the players and singers; because it is easy to discover whether their fingers and throats are set in motion by coldness and ill-will, or love and pleasure. You must surely understand this. Just as a writer who speaks to the heart is sure to please, so is a composer who gives the player something which he can not only play and enjoy himself, but make others enjoy too. This speaks for itself.—I may hope that you will take my account of Felix's progress as grist to my own mill.

“You know the misery of these schools even better than I do: great aims, little talent, enormous means, and all for nothing. These are the evils; and so one ought indeed to be glad

to find some one who does what he can, and is always ready for every emergency."

In a letter of the 26th of December, 1824, he says: "To-day we are to hear my Felix's latest double Concerto.\* The boy is now well rooted, and gives promise of growing into a healthy tree. His individuality becomes more and more apparent, and blends itself so well with the spirit of the age, that it seems to come out of it like a bird from the egg."

In the spring of 1825, Felix went to Paris with his father to consult Cherubini as to making music his vocation. Cherubini had long been a perfect terror to the artists of Paris, and everyone trembled at his bitter sarcasms. Halévy had fairly frightened the new arrivals by telling them that there were days when it was impossible to extract anything from him. To a young musician who played to

\* In E major, for two pianos and orchestra. This work, like the former one in A flat, still remains<sup>144</sup> in manuscript.



him, he said: "Do you perhaps paint well?" and to another: "Vous ne ferez jamais rien!" When Halévy showed him anything of his own it was a sure sign of its being especially good if Cherubini said nothing and made no faces. Once, and once only, when Halévy had played his opera "La Juive" to him, did the spiteful old Maestro deign a remark: "C'est bien, mais c'est trop long; il faut couper."

Felix had just finished his B minor quartett for piano and strings, and intended to dedicate it to Goethe. It is easy to imagine the excitement of the Parisians when, after a very poor performance by French artists, Cherubini went up to Felix smiling and nodding. He then turned to the bystanders and said: "Ce garçon est riche; il fera bien; il fait même déjà bien, mais il dépense trop de son argent, il met trop d'étoffe dans son habit." Everyone declared that such a thing was unheard

of, especially as Cherubini afterwards added, "Je lui parlerai, alors il fera bien." Halévy was not present at the time, and absolutely refused to believe that Cherubini could have so spoken to a young musician. To us, however, it seems natural enough for one who had received Goethe's blessing, not to be afraid of Cherubini.

The opinions which the boy expressed on the dreaded Maestro and on the general state of music in Paris, show a decided independence of mind and real originality. He compares Cherubini to an extinct volcano, still throwing out occasional flashes and sparks, but quite covered with ashes and stones. In the "Kyrie" which he wrote for Cherubini during his stay in Paris, he actually ventured to parody the style of the terrible old Maestro himself.

"Clever fellow!" says Zelter; "he has contrived to compose the piece in a style which, though possibly not the right one, is just the one

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which Cherubini was groping after, and, unless I am mistaken, has not found."

Felix felt in his heart that his vocation was to be a German artist; and the conviction made him shrink from the excitement of Paris, and blame the want of serious musical feeling and of true enthusiasm for the art, which prevailed among the French musicians.

"I had hoped," says he, "to find this the native home of music, musicians, and musical taste; but, upon my word, it is nothing of the kind. The *salons*, though I did not expect much from them, are wearisome; people care only for trivial, showy music, and won't put up with anything serious or solid. The orchestras (I have heard those of the Opera and the Académie Royale) are very good, but by no means perfect; and lastly, the musicians themselves are either dried up, or else do nothing but abuse Paris and the Parisians.

"At the concert at Tremont last Sunday I heard

Urhahn\* play some variations on the viola. He tunes it differently to the usual way, that is to say, f c, f c. This is very effective the first time you hear it, but still it is a bad plan, for the instrument loses the depth of the viola without gaining the acuteness of the violin, while it is obviously only available in F major, or at best C major. After this Kalkbrenner played a new sextett of his own in A minor. The piano has quite the leading part, and the clarinet, cello, and double-bass merely accompany. There are some pretty

\* A friend has kindly given me the following information:—“Urhahn was the principal viola player at the Grand Opéra. He was my godfather, a great and dear friend of my parents, a profound musician, and the greatest original imaginable. His originality showed itself in an excess of piety; while playing the *Soli* in the ballet of the Grand Opéra he never would look at the ballet dancers, even when Habeneck, the conductor, bade him do so for the sake of the *ensemble*. He was ascetic in the full sense of the word, and would for eight or ten days live on radishes and bread and butter to get rid of inconvenient thoughts. His health of course became worse and worse by this hygiene, and he died young, of cancer. He came from Malmédy, near Aix-la-Chapelle, but lived in Paris from 1821. He was a great friend of Begas the painter.”—*Trans.*

things in it, but mostly taken from Hummel's septett, on which the piece is really modelled. He played very well, though with some unsteadiness, on account of the fearful and unbearable heat. Just before he began he turned to Herz, and said with a sweet smile, 'Play for me, and I promise to give you ten sous.' But Herz, smilingly stroking his black beard, answered with a smile, 'Nay, that would not be agreeable to the public.' 'I beg your pardon,' said Kalkbrenner with another smile.

"Yesterday we were at the Feydeau, and saw the last act of an opera of Catel's, called 'L'Aubergiste,' and Auber's 'Léocadie.' The theatre is large, cheerful, and pretty; the orchestra very good; and if the fiddles are not as fine as those at the Opera Buffa, the basses and the wind and the *ensemble* are better; and the conductor stands in the middle. The singers do not sing badly, though they have no voices; their acting

is lively and rapid, and the whole goes well together. But now for the chief thing, the composition. Of the first opera I will say nothing, for I only heard half of it, and that was poor and weak, though not without pretty, light melody; but the celebrated 'Léocadie,' by the celebrated Auber—anything so miserable you really cannot conceive. The story is taken from a wretched novel of Cervantes, wretchedly cooked up into an opera, and I could never have believed that so vulgar and objectionable a piece should not only hold its ground, but in a short time run through fifty-two representations before an audience of Frenchmen, who really have nice feeling and correct taste. To this novel, which belongs to Cervantes' wild period, Auber has made the most miserably tame music. I don't speak of there being no breadth, no life, no originality in the whole opera, and of its being patched together of alternate reminiscences of Cherubini and Rossini; I don't speak of there being no vestige of

seriousness or spark of passion, no power, no fire in it, nor that in the greatest climaxes the singers have to make *roulades* and shakes and passages; but surely the favourite of the public, the pupil of Cherubini, a man with grey hair, might have been expected to know something about instrumentation, now that it has become so easy through the publication of the scores of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven! Not even that. Just fancy that out of the many pieces in the whole opera, there are perhaps three in which the piccolo does not play the chief part. The Overture begins with a *tremolando* in the strings, but very soon out pop the piccolo from the garret, and the bassoon from the cellar, and pipe away a melody between them. In the subject of the Allegro the strings have the Spanish accompaniment, and the piccolo tootles another air to it. Léocadie's first melancholy air, 'Pauvre Léocadie, il vaudrait mieux mourir,' is appropriately accompanied by a piccolo; the piccolo

expresses the brother's rage, the lover's grief, the peasant girl's joy—in short, the whole thing might be capitally arranged for two flutes and a jew's-harp *ad libitum*. Oh dear!

“You tell me also, Fanny, that I ought to set up for a reformer, and teach people to like Onslow, Reicha, Beethoven, and Sebastian Bach. I do that already, as far as I can. But recollect, my dear child, that the people here don't know a note of ‘Fidelio,’ and look upon Bach as a mere full-bottomed wig, powdered with nothing but learning.

“The other day, at Kalkbrenner's request, I played Bach's organ preludes in E minor and A minor. The people thought them both sweetly pretty, and somebody remarked that the beginning of the A minor prelude bore a striking resemblance to a favourite duett of Monsigny's (a French opera writer)!—everything danced before my eyes.

“At Madame Kiené's a few days ago I played



my B minor quartett with Baillot. He began quite in a careless, indifferent sort of way, but at a passage in the first part of the first movement he got into the spirit of the thing, and played the rest of the movement and the Adagio very well and with plenty of vigour. Then came the Scherzo: I suppose the opening of it pleased him, for he went off like anything, at a tremendous pace, the others after him, I trying to keep them back; but it's not much good trying to keep back three runaway Frenchmen. And so they carried me along with them, always madder and madder and faster and louder; and especially at one place near the end, where the subject of the Trio comes at the top, against the beat, Baillot lashed away in the most furious style, in a rage with himself because he had made the same mistake several times over. When it was finished, all that he said to me was, 'Encore une fois ce morceau.' That time it went smoothly, but still more madly than the first time. The last movement at first went like

wildfire. At that part near the end where the subject comes in for the last time in B minor, quite *fortissimo*, Baillot sawed away at his strings in a perfect frenzy, so that I was almost frightened at my own quartett; and at the end, he came up to me, again without a word, and embraced me twice as if he wanted to stifle me. Rode also was very much pleased, and a long while afterwards, suddenly said to me in German: 'Bravo, mein Schatz!' . . . . Fanny, you write to me of prejudices and partiality, of growling and owlshness, and of the land flowing with milk and honey—as you call this Paris. Just reflect, I beseech you, are you in Paris, or am I? Surely I must know more about it than you. Is it my way to let myself be hampered by prejudices in my judgment of music? And even if it were, is Rode prejudiced when he says, 'C'est une dégringolade musicale?' Is Neukomm prejudiced when he says, 'C'est pas ici le pays des orchestres?' Is Herz prejudiced when he says,

'The public here can understand and appreciate nothing but variations'? and are thousands of others prejudiced when they swear at Paris? It is you who are so prejudiced that you believe my impartial statements less than the lovely picture of an Eldorado Paris that your own fancy has drawn. Take up the *Constitutionnel*, what are they giving at the Italian opera besides Rossini? Take up a music-catalogue, what is published or sold but romances and potpourris? Wait till you have been here and heard 'Alceste,' 'Robin de Bois,' and the soirées; or till you have heard the music in the King's Chapel, and then judge and scold, but not now when you are hampered and regularly blinded by prejudices. But forgive me for this *Allegro feroce*.

"I have been busy these last days making a Kyrie à 5 voce and *grandissimo* orchestra: in bulk it surpasses anything I have yet written. There is also a tolerable amount of *pizzicato* in

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it, and as for the trombones, they will need good windpipes."\*

This is a characteristic account of French musical life. It shows what a strictly artistic tendency the young musician had already developed at the early age of sixteen, and how unhesitatingly, in the very spirit of Goethe, he passed sentence on those who looked upon music as a mere trade.

Felix remained in Paris from the 23rd of March till the 19th of May; on the journey home he stopped at Weimar for a short visit, of which Goethe gives Zelter the following account:—  
“Herr Mendelssohn stayed far too short a time on his way home. Felix produced his last new quartett, and astonished everyone with it. This personal and definite dedication through the ear pleased me very much. Felix told the ladies some things about the

\* Letters to his parents of the 18th and 22nd April, 1825.

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Parisian musical life, which were very characteristic of the present time.”

As an acknowledgment for the Dedication of the B minor quartett, Goethe soon after this sent his young friend what Zelter calls a “beautiful love-letter.” It ran as follows:—

“You have given me very great pleasure, my dear Felix, by your valuable present; which, though already announced, took me by surprise. The print, the title-page, and the splendid binding, all vie with each other to make it a magnificent gift. I regard it as the graceful embodiment of that beautiful, rich, energetic soul which so astonished me when you first made me acquainted with it. Pray accept my very best thanks, and let me hope that you will soon give me another opportunity of admiring in person the fruits of your astonishing activity. Remember me to your good parents, your equally gifted sister, and your excellent master.

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May a lively remembrance of me always be maintained in such a circle.

“Yours faithfully,

“J. W. GOETHE.

“WEIMAR, 18th June, 1825.”

Goethe's kindly sympathy urged on the young artist to fresh and unceasing efforts. He completed his fifth\* opera, and composed his Octett.† “He takes his time by the ears, and has his own way with it,” writes Zelter. “A few weeks ago he gave his excellent tutor Heyse a most pleasant birthday present — namely, Terence's ‘Andria’ translated entirely by himself in metre; and it seems that there are some very good lines in it, but I have not yet seen it. He plays the piano like fury, and isn't backward at stringed instruments; and

\* “Die Hochzeit des Camacho: Comic Opera in two Acts” (Op. 10).

† The well-known Octett for strings in E flat (Op. 20).

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with all that he is strong and healthy, and can swim against the stream like anything.

“They have reviewed his quartetts and symphonies somewhat coldly in the musical paper, but it won't hurt him; for these reviewers are themselves but young fellows looking for the very hat they hold in their hands.

“If one did not remember how Gluck and Mozart were criticised forty years ago, one might lose heart. Things that are completely above the heads of these gentlemen, they cut up as coolly as possible, and fancy they can judge the whole house by one brick. And what I especially give him credit for, is the way in which he works at everything as a whole and with his whole might; and finishes whatever he begins, let it turn out as it will; and he therefore seldom shows any special affection for the finished things. Of course one now and then finds a little heterogeneous material, but it gets carried away by

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the stream, and ordinary faults and weaknesses are rare." \*

"Now I must beg you," writes Goethe to Zelter after Felix had sent him his "Andria," "to be so good as to give my best thanks to the excellent and industrious Felix for this glorious specimen of his serious æsthetic studies; his work will be a special amusement for the circle of art-lovers at Weimar during the coming long winter evenings."

On the 20th February, 1827, Zelter continues his report as follows:—"My Felix has accepted an engagement at Stettin to perform his latest works there, and set off on the 16th. The dear boy attained his nineteenth year on the 3rd of this month, and his productions gain in ripeness and originality. His last opera, which occupies a whole evening, has been promised at the Theatre Royal for more than a year, but

\* Letter of the 6th November, 1825.



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has not yet managed to see the light; whereas all manner of French trash and rubbish gets put on the boards, and hardly survives a second representation. As we are young and able to stand against all the prejudices which embitter the best part of the lives of so many other people, it cannot do us much harm; but I do wish that with all his industry he may as quickly as possible grow out of this time of ours, for one has to be civil to it, whether one likes it or not; and in this I could still be of use to him, by making him lean more and more on himself."

In the summer of 1827, Felix matriculated at the Berlin University, and attended the lectures of Gans, Ritter, Lichtenstein, and Hegel. "Hegel," says Zelter, "is just giving a course of lectures on music; Felix writes them out thoroughly well, but, like a rogue, manages to introduce all Hegel's personal peculiarities in the most naïve manner.

“This Hegel says: ‘There is no real music now; we have advanced, but we are not near the right thing by a long way.’—We know that as much or as little as he does, if he could only demonstrate to us musically whether he himself is on the right road. And so meanwhile we will go steadily onwards, *piano* and *sano*, as prompted by God whom we all serve. For we don’t know what we ought to pray for, and always want more, and so others may do the same.”

It was with the most lively interest that Goethe watched the process of development which Zelter describes in this original style. When he heard how Bach’s gigantic “Passion” had been performed under the direction of Felix on the 11th March, 1829, after lying neglected for nearly a hundred years, he wrote to his friend: “It is just as if I heard the roaring of the sea from a distance. I wish you joy of so complete a success in that which is

almost beyond achievement. I rejoice with all my heart in the satisfaction that Felix gives you: amongst my many pupils, I have not been so fortunate with more than a very few."

After Felix's accident during his journey in England in the summer of 1829, when he was thrown out of a carriage and hurt his knee, Goethe made many anxious inquiries after him in his letters to Zelter: "Above all, I want to know if there is favourable news of the good Felix. I feel the greatest interest in him, for it is most vexatious to see one who has turned out so remarkable, endangered by a tiresome accident, in the midst of progress and activity. Pray give me some consolation."

In the spring of 1830, when Felix had grown from a young man into a matured artist, he had again the satisfaction of beholding the face of the immortal master.

In Zelter's opinion the atmosphere of Berlin hindered and cramped the progress of his pupil.

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He "feared," as he expressed himself, "to see him dissolve on the spot, like a jelly, in the midst of the pernicious and idle family tittle-tattle of the place. I can hardly await the time when the boy will be out of reach of all the confounded musical trash of Berlin, and get to Italy, where, to my mind, he ought to have gone long ago. There the very stones have ears, while here they eat lentils and pig's ears."

In his rough way the old Professor had hit the right nail on the head; for surely it is a blessing for any ardent nature to be able at the outset of life to shake off the restraint of home and see the world.

However hard the parting from their son might prove, his parents knew very well that the separation would be of real benefit to him, and it was determined that Felix should undertake a long journey. Before going to the birth-place of art, he was to seek the Poet's blessing on his visit to Rome "I have said nothing to

my belongings," wrote Goethe when Zelter announced the approaching visit, "so that their delight at seeing Felix again may be heightened by the surprise;" and on the 21st of April, 1830, when the expected visitor was detained by an attack of measles, he asks: "How is it about Felix? Has he recovered, and are we soon to be rejoiced by his presence?"

When Felix arrived at Weimar in the end of May, he found Goethe outwardly unchanged, though at first somewhat silent and apathetic. "I think he wanted to see how I should take it; and I was vexed because I thought he had really become so. But luckily the conversation turned upon the Women's Societies of Weimar, and the 'Chaos,' an extravagant paper which the ladies publish among themselves, and to which I have ventured to become a contributor; and then old Goethe suddenly began to get jovial, and to chaff the two ladies about charitable doings, and would-

be intellectualism and subscriptions, and sick-nursing, which he seems particularly to detest; he called me to join in the attack, and as I didn't wait to be asked twice he soon became quite his old self, and even more kind and confidential than he used to be with me. He stormed away at the universal sentimentality and melancholy of young men, reviled the exhibitions, and sales of work for the distressed, where the Weimar ladies had stalls, and nothing could be got because the young men settled it all beforehand amongst themselves, and the things were hidden till the right buyers came. After dinner, all at once he began 'Gute Kinder—hübsche Kinder, muss immer lustig sein — tolles Volk,' making eyes all the time like an old lion when he wants to go to sleep. Then I had to play to him, and he observed how strange it was that he had heard no music for so long a time, and meanwhile we had always been advancing, while he knew nothing

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of it; and so I ought to tell him a great deal about it all, for 'we must once more have a sensible talk together.' . . .

"As I had asked Goethe to call me 'Du,' he sent me word by Otilie that in that case I must stay more than two days, or else he could not get into the way of it again. And then he repeated the same thing to me himself, and said I shouldn't miss anything if I stayed a little longer, and invited me to come to dinner every day, unless I wanted to go anywhere else; and as I have now been there every day, and yesterday had to tell him all about Scotland, and Hengstenberg, and Spontini, and Hegel's *Æsthetics*,—and as he sent me to Tiefurth with the ladies, forbidding me, however, to go on to Berka, because there was a beautiful girl living there, and he did not wish to plunge me into misery,—and as I felt that this was the very Goethe of whom people will one day declare that he is not at all *one* person, but is made up

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of several smaller Goethes—I should have been very foolish indeed if I had grudged the time.”

And so the old merry life which they had led in the autumn of 1821 was begun again; they made music, and wrote doggrel rhymes, and when the old gentleman had gone to his room at nine o'clock, they danced, and never thought of separating before midnight.

Goethe commissioned a painter to make a portrait of the young artist for a collection of his friends' likenesses which he had for some time been making. Every morning he had a music lesson. This consisted in Felix's playing to him for an hour, pieces by all the great composers in chronological order, and then explaining what each had done to further the art. All the while he would sit in a dark corner, "like a Jupiter Tonans, with his old eyes flashing fire." At first he would not venture upon Beethoven at all. But when Felix declared he



could not help it, and played the first movement of the C minor Symphony, he remarked, "That causes no emotion; it is only astonishing and grandiose;" and then, again, after muttering away to himself, he observed, "That is very grand, quite wild, enough to bring the house about one's ears; and what must it be when all the people are playing at once!"

After dinner he would remain alone in the room with his young friend for an hour, talking uninterruptedly. He brought out engravings and explained them, and talked about "Hernani" and Lamartine's Elegies, and the theatre, and pretty girls; and although he generally saw but little company, he now again invited people to come and hear Felix play, and openly expressed his admiration before them with his favourite word, "Ganz stupend!" Then he got together the beauties of Weimar, and exhorted him to pay court to them: "My dear fellow, you must go to the women and make yourself

very sweet to them." When Ottilie asked whether Felix did not come too often, he grumbled out: "Why, I am only just beginning to have proper talks with him, and he is so clear-headed about his own subjects, that I must learn a great deal from him." He would not hear of his departure, and drew Ottilie aside from the company to a window to say to her, "You must manage to make him stay;" and when her persuasions had failed, he came out into the garden himself to add his own, and to assure Felix that there was no hurry for him to go, that he had much more to tell him, and in return wanted to hear a great deal more music; that Weimar was really the aim of his young friend's journey, and that it was impossible to imagine what he could wish for here that he would find at the *tables d'hôte*. Ottilie and Ulrike helped, and reminded him how the old gentleman never pressed people to stay, but so much oftener obliged them to go, and

how it fell to nobody's lot to have their share of happy days so fixed that they might throw away the certainty of any; . . . adding that they would accompany him to Jena. Who could have resisted such representations? Felix remained, and had every reason not to repent of his decision; he speaks of the following day, the 1st of June, as the most delightful which he had ever spent there; he tells how, after driving through the park, he found the old gentleman in the best of humours, and how he began talking, and got into one of those conversations which one never forgets all one's life. Goethe set out with rallying his young friend about his various passions, great and small, for the beauties of Weimar. "Jenny von Pappenheim," he said,\* "is as beautiful, as unconsciously graceful and charming, as a piece of phosphorescent wood or a glow-worm by daylight, which one can't

\* The following is from my father's unpublished diary.

see." Two other girls, the Spiegels, "gave one the feeling of looking at a couple of great rose-bushes. . . . I had a monstrous one in my garden which blossomed magnificently, but when these girls stood in front of it, one could see nothing but them." . . . Then he got to talking about the "Murette de Portici," the Englishman Stendhal,\* and Walter Scott. "Mr. Stendhal is one of the mediocre sort; he is intelligent and has a certain amount of knowledge, but the best and highest he has not got. 'Waverley' is Scott's best novel, and contains all

\* Stendhal was a Frenchman, whose real name was Marie-Henri Beyle, that of Stendhal being adopted as a *nom de plume*. He was born at Grenoble in 1783, subsequently became attached to the household of Napoleon I., and followed the French army in the campaigns of 1812-14. After 1814 he resided at Milan, and devoted himself to literature. His chief writings are biographies of Haydn and Mozart (which he translated literally from the "Haydine" of Carpani, and published without acknowledgment under the name of Bombet), of Metastasio and Rossini; a History of Painting in Italy, essays, romances, &c. His writings display great originality and a superior mind, though his inaccuracies are frequent, and his opinions often startling.—*Trans.*

his succeeding works; without being brilliant, it is sufficiently interesting;—so is ‘The Fair Maid of Perth.’ It is amusing to see how Scott always styles himself the ‘Author of Waverley.’ Iffland began just in the same way with his ‘Jägern,’ which contains all his good and bad points; and so did Kotzebue with his ‘Menschenhass und Reue,’ which to this day makes all the women cry their eyes out, though a man would only scratch his head over it.”

“Schiller,” observed Felix, “at any rate did not begin in that manner.”

“Schiller,” continued Goethe, “was obliged to make a complete change after ‘Don Carlos,’ he could not have gone on in that style; though even at the present day people are fond of seeing ‘The Robbers,’ because many of them are still in that same’ insane and ridiculous state of mind. When I was director of the theatre at Lauchstedt, the students begged me to give ‘The

Robbers,' but I declined for fear of a disturbance; however, as they promised me on their honour to keep quiet, I said: 'You are delightful, charming people, and if you will be very orderly you shall have it.' The house was immensely full, the public quiet as mice, even 'Ein freies Leben' was sung with the greatest gravity; and as they had behaved so well, and had also brought in some money, I was able the next day to praise them.

"Schiller understood what I never could do—namely, how to introduce matters of fact into his works; while he was writing 'Tell,' he read Swiss history, and had maps and drawings and the like hanging up in his room. There was something terrific in his progress; if you had not seen him for a week, you found him quite changed, and did not know what to make of him for astonishment. He went forward unceasingly till his forty-sixth year, and then came the end. He could have produced two

tragedies every year; but not more, excepting translations and contributions to the *Musen-Almanach*, and so forth. A hundred *carolins* are not to be despised, and he needed them for himself and his wife. He had asked the Duke for a moderate salary, on the agreement that it should be doubled as soon as he was unfit for work; and the Duke gave it very willingly, for he was rather covetous of great men, and in such matters did more in Weimar than any king."

"He was rewarded for it," observed Felix.

"Yes," said Goethe, "he cannot be removed from the place which he now occupies in the world's history. He wanted to secure Schuckmann, and I corresponded with him about it; and Schlosser also, but I dissuaded him from that, because Schlosser was too unbending and immovable on his standpoint, as well as somewhat pedantic; he was my brother-in-law, so you see I did not show much tendency to nepotism.

And so this place became a sort of general focus. Oh if I could but write a fourth volume of my life! but there's no getting at it, what with botany, and meteorology, and all the other foolish things that no one will ever thank me for. It would be such a history of the year 1775, as nobody could know or write as I could. How at that time the nobility began to feel itself rather eclipsed by the middle class, and had to make exertions so as not to be left behind; how Liberalism, Jacobinism, and all other inventions of the evil one cropped up; how one began a new life here, working and producing, and occasionally at the right moment falling in love, and thereby disturbing one's peace of mind; and how the aristocratical spirit of Nicolai and the other Berliners, which was thought a good deal of at that time, had to be taken down by us young men—for, in spite of all our awkwardness, we had plenty of spirit and energy; then there was Schiller's first visit to



Weimar, when he left it without being noticed by anyone; and then came Jean Paul, but found the circle already closed; and after him Bertuch, who was bent upon being practical, and tried to produce everything that could possibly be wanted, and ended by founding the '*Industrie-komptoir*'! Yes, that time was like the spring, when everything is bursting into life, and one tree stands bare, while another is already in full leaf. So it was in 1775!"

The young artist listened with the liveliest interest to the ardent words in which the old Poet thus recalled his youth and the intellectual spring of 1775. "It was one of those conversations which one can never forget, all one's life." He showed plainly how touched and delighted he was, and when he thanked Goethe, the latter answered: "Well, it's a mere chance; it all came out quite incidentally, called forth by the charm of your

presence.” Then he asked for several of his favourite Mozart pieces, the C minor Fantasia, a Haydn Trio, and a Weber Capriccio, and promised his young friend “something important” as a parting gift. The next day he gave him a sheet of the autograph of “Faust” inscribed with the following words: “To my dear young friend F. M. B., the powerful and gentle ruler of the piano, as a remembrance of happy May days in 1830. J. W. v. GOETHE.”

Felix had mentioned a picture of Ostade’s representing a peasant family at prayer, which had made a great impression on him in 1821; and when he came into the Poet’s room on the morning of the 3rd of June to take leave, he found Goethe sitting before a large portfolio looking at this very picture. “Yes, yes,” said the old Poet in a solemn tone, “the hour has come, and we must see that we keep straight till your return; but we must not part from one another without a moment’s devotion,

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and so let us look at this 'Prayer' together for a little while." "Then he told me that I was to write to him sometimes—"Courage! courage! I shall do it from here," writes Felix home)—and then he kissed me, and we drove off to Jena."

Goethe, in a letter to Zelter, gives his own impression of the visit as follows: "Just now, at half-past nine, with the clearest sky and the brightest sunshine, the excellent Felix, having spent a fortnight with us very pleasantly, and enchanted everybody by the perfection and charm of his art, is driving off with Otilie, Ulrike, and the children, to Jena, there also to delight his friends, and leaves behind him a memory which deserves to be for ever cherished.

"His coming did me a great deal of good, for my feelings about music are unchanged; I hear it with pleasure, interest and reflection; I love its history, for who can understand any sub-

ject without thoroughly initiating himself into its origin and progress? It is a great thing that Felix fully recognizes the value of going through its successive stages, and happily his memory is so good as to furnish him with any number of examples of all kinds. From the Bach period downwards, he has brought Haydn, Mozart, and Gluck to life for me, has given me clear ideas of the great modern masters of *technique*, and lastly has made me understand his own productions, and given me plenty to think about in himself. He took away with him my warmest blessing."

Goethe sent another earnest request to his departing guest, through Otilie, that he would write often, and thus "revive his charming presence" amongst them.

In a letter from Otilie of the 8th June, we read as follows: "We feel like people who don't know how to fill up a blank; or like schoolboys, who find everything excessively

dull after the holidays : in these descriptions I include my papa. You see, dear Felix, what an advantage you have over us? If you feel a reaction and are tempted to grumble, I am sure you only do it in the most touching sounds, whilst ours buzz round our heads like bats, and don't exactly make us pleasanter. My father sends you word that your stay here, besides giving him great pleasure, was of lasting use to him, as you have made him understand so many things."

At Munich Felix mustered courage to write to Goethe himself, thanking him for the ever memorable days which he had enjoyed, and describing the life in Munich, and the artists to whom the Poet had given him introductions : "Stieler in particular was wonderfully kind and amiable to me. The way in which he spoke of you and yours, the beaming delight which overspread his whole person when he recalled the time he had spent with you, made me at

once feel specially drawn towards him. He is painting your 'Fisher,' and told me that the picture originated partly in his dislike to one which had made a great sensation at the Berlin Exhibition, and in which the subject was treated in far too sensuous a manner. It may be true, but I don't know how he is to succeed in entirely avoiding the difficulty, for if you are to have the figure of a woman rising fresh from the water, and at the same time singing and speaking in a lovely way, she must be charming, and the Fisherman to whom she beckons must be a beautiful graceful youth; whereas his picture seems to me to be based on quite another idea. But as yet it is only sketched-in, and at any rate the head of the nymph is already so graceful and pretty that she is sure to give universal pleasure. Stieler has also just finished a portrait for the King's private collection of beauties, and is perpetually looking about amongst the Munich

girls for new models. He is delighted with this commission, and no wonder, for the ladies pay him no end of attention, and would give anything to please him so that he may give them the prize, and pick them out as the most beautiful.

“Music is very much run after here, and there is plenty of it, but it seems to me that almost everything makes an impression in this place, and that the impression does not last. It is most amusing to see the difference between a Munich and a Berlin musical party. At Berlin, when a piece of music comes to an end, the whole company sits in solemn silence, each one considering what his opinion is to be, nobody giving a sign of applause or pleasure, and all the while the performer is in the most painful embarrassment, not knowing whether, and in what spirit, he has been listened to. And yet, afterwards, he often finds people who have given all their attention, and been very

deeply moved, though outwardly appearing so cold and indifferent. Here, on the contrary, it is great fun playing at a party, because the people can't help talking every minute about what they like; sometimes even they begin clapping and applauding in the middle of a piece; and it is not at all uncommon, when one gets up from playing, to find that everybody has moved, because sometimes all of a sudden they want to come and watch one's fingers, and stand all round the piano, or some one wishes to make an observation to some one else, and goes and sits down by him and talks. Afterwards they overwhelm you with compliments and kindness; but I don't know whether I should not be afraid that, after a day or two, much of the vividness of the impression would fade.\*

\* This contrast between North and South Germany also struck Schumann. He says in one of his papers (*Gesammelte Schriften*, iii. 233), à propos to Liszt's reception at Dresden, "do not know the applause-thermometer of the Dresden public well enough to



“The Opera is supplied in the amplest manner, and yet does not produce anything out of the common way, because there is no leading spirit to direct the whole thing. Schechner, for example, is one of the most remarkable singers we have; but because they praise her good points up to the skies, and pass over her failings, she is accustoming herself, by degrees, to all sorts of mannerisms. It seems moreover to be thought *bon ton* to abuse the opera and the theatre, and to pay much attention to the critics, who try to earn their scanty daily bread by scoffing and sneering; this again discourages the actors, the bitterness increases on both sides, and thus it arises that there is seldom much pleasure or real enjoyment to be had at the theatre.”

Felix's second letter to Goethe is dated “Rome, judge of the impression he produced. Of all Germans the Viennese spare their hands least, and in their idolatry have been known to clap till they split their gloves—but in North Germany it is different.”

March the 5th, 1831," and gives a lively and amusing sketch of artistic life in the Eternal City. "A few German artists are to be seen with long hair and moustaches, turned down collars, old-fashioned German coats, tobacco-pipes, and bull-dogs. It does not seem as if the great masters, or the desire to learn, had anything to do with their coming here. In their opinion Raphael is weak, and Titian merely a good colourist."

"Niebuhr," remarked Goethe, when telling Eckermann\* about this letter from Felix, "was right when he predicted a time of barbarism; it is here already, we are in the midst of it, for in what else does barbarism consist but in not recognizing what is really good?"

Felix's description of the Carnival, the election of the new Pope, the Revolution that broke out immediately afterwards, the courageous behaviour of Horace Vernet, and the pitiable cowardice of

\* Conversation of March 22nd, 1831.

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the German painters, gave the Poet occasion to speak of the "mental perversion which originating forty years before in a few individuals had now pervaded the German artists. Their doctrine was, that the main things necessary to enable an artist to equal the greatest, were piety and genius. Such a doctrine was very insinuating, and was eagerly caught at; for no learning is necessary to make one pious, and genius everybody inherits from his mother. It is sufficient to utter something which flatters self-conceit and indolence, for it to be sure of a favourable reception with the public."

By this "mental infection" Felix was in no danger of being attacked.

"Before I say anything else," writes Goethe to Zelter, "I must tell you that I have got a most charming and detailed letter from Felix, dated Rome, March the 5th, giving a delightful account of the excellent fellow. He

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will no doubt give the same, in an equally modest spirit, to his parents and his Berlin friends.\* It is not necessary to be anxious about him any longer; his talents, like a beautiful swimming-belt, will bear him safely even through the waves and breakers of this alarming barbarism."

Thus did Goethe's warm sympathy accompany his young friend on his wanderings. The Poet was quite angry with his father for not allowing him, after all his ready compliance, to extend his journey to Sicily, as he wished to do. "Italy without Sicily does not leave a complete image on the mind. It is a very great mistake of the Herr Papa not to send our good Felix to Sicily, for now he will come away with an unsatisfied longing."

Felix had long cherished the idea of composing Goethe's "Walpurgisnacht;" on leaving Vienna he had begun to work at it, and

\* See the letters of March 8th, 15th, &c. in the "Reisebriefe."

managed to finish it during his Italian journey, in spite of the difficulty of the subject. Goethe expressed his approbation and pleasure on hearing that his young friend had undertaken what Zelter had attempted in vain, and in the following words sketched out for him the fundamental ideas of the poem :—"The principles on which this poem is based are symbolic in the highest sense of the word. For in the history of the world, it must continually recur that an ancient, tried, established, and tranquillizing order of things will be forced aside, displaced, thwarted, and, if not annihilated, at least pent up within the narrowest possible limits by rising innovations. The intermediate period, when the opposition of hatred is still possible and practicable, is forcibly represented in this poem, and the flames of a joyful and undisturbed enthusiasm once more blaze high in brilliant light."

During his return from Italy Felix gave a more lengthened and detailed description

of his travels in Switzerland. Writing to Goethe from Lucerne on the 28th of August, 1831, he says : \* “ I could not leave out Switzerland, which has always been my favourite country. I shall never forget this time that I have spent roaming about the mountains on foot, all alone, without knowing a creature, and thinking of nothing but the new and wonderfully beautiful things that burst upon me every moment.

“ I came from the land of bright skies and warmth ; but Switzerland gave me a very different reception : I found rain and storms and mist, and on the mountains often had to go through snowstorms. But somehow or other, I rather liked it ; and occasionally, when the great black rocky peaks emerge from the clouds, or a whole

\* Through the kindness of Professor Mendelssohn, I am enabled to insert the whole of this letter, of which in the original he has only given portions. The autograph appears to have suffered much bad usage ; it contains at present neither signature, address, nor date, and it was only by a minute and careful comparison that its date could be fixed with certainty.—*Translator.*

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reach of country seems to burst into sunshine out of the midst of the fog, it is quite glorious. No amount of bad weather could stop me from climbing about as much as possible; sometimes the guide refused to go with me, often I could not see anything at all, but still I did what I could, and when a fine day came at last, it was a double pleasure. Here, Nature seems to make even a grander impression on me than elsewhere, for I am more completely surrounded by her, and the whole country and people depend entirely and solely upon her.

“You must have heard of the terrible inundations and storms in the Bernese Oberland; I was there just at the time, and it was awful to see how everything connected with human beings, even the most durable things,—streets, bridges, meadows and houses,—could so easily disappear in a moment, without leaving a trace—as if they had never existed. Three days

afterwards Nature was all calm and smiling again, as if nothing had happened, and the people at work to restore order as far as possible. I was just then on my way to the lake of Thun, without a guide, and quite alone. Since that day when you told me about your observations on the weather and on clouds, I have taken a special interest in the subject, and paid more attention to what was going on above me. I could distinctly see the gradual way in which the storm came on; the clouds had been gathering for two days, and at last, on the evening of the 7th, a great thunderstorm burst forth, and went on the whole night, with continual rain. In the morning it looked as if clouds were coming down instead of rain. I never saw clouds lie so low before; they had stationed themselves all about round the bases of the mountains, far down into the valleys, quite thick and white, with overhead nothing but black mist. It did



not rain at all for a little while, till the lower clouds began to float up and down, and then the rain went on again for that whole day and the following night; but the actual masses of clouds and mist only collected on the third morning, the 9th, and then the whole breadth of the horizon and the sky was completely filled with them. Storms generally come up with a clear sky; but in this case the masses of clouds piled themselves one upon another, and were driven across country from the plains in the north-west, right into the mountains on the south-east. It was impossible to distinguish the opposite side of the lake. In the intervals, when one layer of clouds had passed, it stopped raining, but in another minute it began pouring down out of the next one with indescribable fury. The footpaths were soon under water, streams were running across the roads in every direction, and the mountain-torrents came rushing down like mad, quite dark-brown, so that

they looked like mere dark earth boiling up out of the river-bed, and being dashed into the lake;—you could see the dark streams far out upon the clear water. The smaller bridges had already been all carried off in the morning, the piers and arches of the large stone ones were also torn away, and one forest-stream brought a lot of furniture and household goods into the lake with it, without anybody's knowing what houses had been demolished. Some days afterwards, when the rain had ceased, and I came into the valley of Lauterbrunnen, the broad high road had completely vanished, and the ground where it had been was nothing but a heap of shingle and sand and great blocks of stone, for fully a mile. The same damage had been done on that day almost all over the country, on the St. Gothard, at Unterwalden, Glarus, &c. Sometimes it was difficult to get along, and one had to go over the mountains, because the water

left no room in the valleys,—but that only made it all the finer on the mountains.

“I spent last week at Engelberg, in an Unterwald monastery several thousand feet above the sea, perfectly secluded, where I found a nice organ and pleasant monks. They had never heard of Sebastian Bach, so that a few of his fugues on the organ were a complete novelty to them; but still they were pleased, and on the saint's day (St. Bartholomew's) I had to play the organ for them, accompany the Mass, and make the Responses. It was the first time on this journey that I had got hold of a decent organ, for in Italy I didn't find a single one in good order. Besides this, the monks had a nice library; and as neither politics, strangers, nor newspapers ever enter the valley, I had a pleasant time of it there.

“At last the weather cleared up again, and to-day it is as if Nature herself wanted to cele-

brate this great occasion.\* The sky is of the brightest blue, the mountains have decked themselves in their most brilliant colours, the landscape looks gay and festal,—all seem to know what an important day it is.

“I have just come from the theatre,—the only one in all Switzerland,—and have been hearing Schiller’s ‘William Tell.’ This being the time of the Diet, the Swiss depart from their custom of preferring no theatre to a bad one. And as it is the only one in the country, you must allow me to say a few words about so national a performance. The whole troupe numbers about ten persons, and the stage is the size and height of a small room; but still they wanted to give the crowded scenes. So two men in pointed hats represented Gessler’s army, two others in round hats the Swiss country people, and the subordinate parts were done away with.

\* Goethe’s last birthday.

Whenever there was anything important to say, they left it out without compunction, and coolly went on with the next words in their parts without any connection, and occasionally with the most comic effect. Some of the actors had only learnt the drift of their parts, and made their own verses on the spot; Gessler's envoy, with the first beat, knocked the drum out of his button-hole on to the ground, and could not fasten it on again, to the great delight of the liberty-loving public, who laughed heartily at the tyrant's slave; but it was impossible to kill the piece entirely, and even with all this it was effective. When the familiar names and places occurred, which one had seen the day before, the people were in raptures, nudging one another and pointing to the pasteboard lake, which they could see far better in the reality by walking out of their houses.

“ But it was Gessler who gave the greatest

delight, because he behaved so uproariously, and ranted and raged in such furious style; his dishevelled beard, red nose, and cap all awry, made him look just like a drunken workman; the whole thing was quite Arcadian and primitive, like the infancy of the drama."

Before this, in the Engelberg valley, Felix had been regaling himself with reading "Tell," and had called to mind Goethe's remark that "Schiller could have *produced* two such tragedies every year." "This craftsmanlike expression suddenly struck me very forcibly when reading the play in all its freshness and life, and such activity appeared to me so prodigiously grand that it made me feel as if I had never yet done anything properly all my life. Everything of mine is so fragmentary, and I feel as if I too must some day produce something."

The performance at Lucerne must have recalled afresh the same remarkable conversation about Schiller. It is well known what a strong

attraction the story had for Goethe, and how, in 1797, when excited by that incomparable landscape, he seriously occupied himself with the idea of writing an epic poem on "Tell," though he subsequently abandoned the subject to his friend. "I already hummed over my hexameters at leisure moments.\* The subject engrossed me so completely that I could see the lake in the calm moonlight, with the mists lighting up the hollows of the mountains, as well as in the loveliest morning sunlight, with the woods and meadows breaking out into jubilant life. Then I brought in a thunder-storm, sweeping out of the ravines upon the lake. Nor was there any lack of nightly stillness, or of secret meetings by bridge and glen."

And with this glorious landscape as a background, what a contrast do Goethe's characters present to Schiller's!—his Tell, a porter wandering through the canton, a self-satisfied, childish

\* Conversation with Eckermann, May 6th, 1827.

unconscious hero : his Gessler, a tyrant of the comfortable order, who "does a good action now and then, by way of a joke;" and by the side of these more passive figures the real characters of the liberators, the Fürsts, Stauffachers, and Winkelrieds!

The contrast between the two greatest German poets is seen in the characteristic variety of their treatment of the same material. Goethe afterwards toned down, or omitted, several forcible traits which Schiller had wished to introduce. "I know well the difficulty I had with him about 'Tell,' when he wanted to make Gessler pick an apple straight from the tree, and shoot it off the boy's head. This was quite against my principles, and I persuaded him at least to suggest some motive for such cruelty, by making Tell's son boast that his father was so good a marksman that he could strike an apple from a tree at a hundred paces. Schiller did not at first take



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to the idea, though finally he yielded to my representations and entreaties, and did what I advised."

Though it was with real pleasure, and no envious feelings, that Goethe watched the labours of his literary friend, he was clearly conscious how entirely opposite were his own sentiments. How telling, for example, is his remark to Felix in reference to Schiller's "terrific progress," and that it was "impossible for him to sustain it beyond his forty-sixth year"! To Eckermann he further\* expressed himself to the effect that in his youth Schiller was too much influenced by physical freedom, and that in maturer life, when he had had enough of physical freedom, he drifted into ideal freedom. "And I might almost say that this idea killed him. For it caused him to make demands on his physical nature which were too much for his powers. . . . He used to force himself to work for days and

\* Conversation of 18th January, 1827.

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weeks when he was not well, with the view of making his powers obey him, and be at his command at all times. . . .

“All those passages in his writings, which some wiseacres declare to be inconsistent, I would call ‘pathological’ passages, because they were written on days when he had not the power to discover his real, true motives. I have all possible respect for the ‘categorical imperative,’ and know how much good may proceed from it; but one must not push it too far, for then the idea of ideal freedom can lead to no good.” In these warnings against the exaggeration of the “categorical imperative,” and this verdict on his friend, so restlessly indefatigable, so early snatched away, we see the perfect and healthy realism of Goethe’s nature.

To Felix, these words of Goethe’s supplied a fresh spur to increased activity: “There is an enormous deal to do in the world,” he writes, “and I will be industrious. To-day I under-

stand for the first time what deep meaning there is in Goethe's words about Schiller, and feel that I must bestir myself."

From Switzerland he travelled by way of Munich to Paris, where he renewed the impressions of the summer of 1825. "The political life there," writes Zelter to Goethe, "no less than the artistic, seems only to strengthen Felix's love for his own country."

It was in Paris that Felix received the news of the death\* of the poet who had shown him the ideal of German Art. "How poor one feels after such a loss as Goethe's!" he writes to his parents on the 31st of March. "How it changes the aspect of the whole country! It is a piece of news that will always be brought back to me by the name of Paris, and the impression of it is one which no kindness, nor any of the bustle and excitement of the gay life here, can ever efface."

\* March 22, 1832.

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All great minds shared the depression of the young artist, who had enjoyed the advantage of Goethe's society.

Zelter, drawn by a mysterious and mighty longing, followed his friend to the grave a few weeks later. With Goethe no longer there to look up to, the world seemed desolate and empty. All missed the peaceful harmony, and the genial brightness, which had kept every antagonism within bounds, and had shed a light on life.

APPENDIX.

## APPENDIX.

THE following letters have not yet been published in any permanent shape; and though not immediately connected with the period of Mendelssohn's life which forms the subject of the previous portion of this volume, they cannot fail to be valuable to all who take an interest in his character and his career.

(I.) *To* HERR GUSTAV PREUSSER, *Leipzig*.\*

(Translation.)

LONDON, 29th June, 1842.

MY DEAR HERR PREUSSER,

Yesterday I received from my brother in Berlin the good news that I need not be there in the beginning of August, so that on our side there is nothing to interfere with the charming plans for the summer.

\* From the original in the possession of Madame Preusser.

How will it be about the Swiss journey? I might really end my letter here, and wait impatiently for your answer, for everything else is contained in that question. How splendid it would be, and what a delight it would be for us, if our lovely plan could really be crowned in this most lovely way. But all this we have already talked over, and you know it, and why should I repeat it? If you can possibly manage it, I do hope you will not deny us, and I may add yourself too, this pleasure. And even if you had to make sacrifices for it yourself, I should like to worry you into it, provided only it lies within the limits of possibility; for such a journey is a lasting and ever new pleasure for one's whole lifetime, and you may perhaps never again have such a summer for it, or such glorious bright weather. To be sure you might find pleasanter travelling companions, but certainly none who would be so glad to have you, and to whom you could give greater pleasure by your presence; and I can promise you that we should get on splendidly together. Our present idea is to leave Frankfort towards the end of July, and spend August in Switzerland. Of course we would gladly change our plans if it should not suit you. Only you must be quick, and tell me what you think about it. I should like best if you merely wrote "Yes!" addressed

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to Frankfort, to the Souchay's house, at the "Fahrthor." What a treat, what a joy that would be for us!

My wife will add a few words to your letter; I find it more difficult than ever to write letters from here, for we lead such a curious and exciting life, and the English are so mad about me this time (I mean they are so kind), that I often come home in the evening quite giddy, and don't know where my head is. But we will talk about all this, please God, on some meadow or beautiful mountain. And now give my love to the whole dear, kind family, and especially to my two very dear nieces (the whole letter is addressed to your wife as well), and to Caroline, and Louise, and quite particularly to my darling godchild, and, in fact, to the whole house (including the front door, and the bell that I know so intimately); and give Schleinitz and David a hundred thousand remembrances from me, and tell them that I often long to see them, and that they might have written to me once, and so might I to them,—and pray forgive these hasty lines. And think it over, and if it lies within the limits of possibility come with us for a lovely trip into that lovely country.

Ever yours, fondly and faithfully,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.



(2.) *To his Mother.\**

(Translation.)

FRANKFORT, *July* 19, 1842.

DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Here we are again, all well and happy, after a delightful journey. We found the dear children in the best health and spirits, and your dear letter reports the same of you all. One lovely day follows another and brings the same beautiful blue sky and warm balmy air. If only one knew how to be grateful enough for all such great pleasures! It is so sweet to be here in Frankfort again, in the midst of so many dear friends and relations, and such a lovely neighbourhood. Every morning at six I go for a walk towards the Darmstadt Observatory, and when I come back the children are just up, and all at breakfast, and then the thought of Paul and Albertine and Switzerland does not depress me so very much. If God would but fulfil all our pleasant prospects, and take our rejoicings for past and future ones as thanks! Cécile made up her mind this morning to go with me, and leave the children here with her mother, who enjoys having them above all things. I know that Cécile will repent

\* From the original, published by Dr. Karl Mendelssohn in *Teber Land und Meer* for 1871, No. 14.

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of it often enough before it comes to the point; but I hope I may be able to keep her up to the mark, and the Pauls will do their part also.

Yesterday evening, just as I was driving to the Mühlberg with Veit and Bernus, we met Hiller and his wife; on the steamer we travelled with Madame Matthieu, then with Herr and Madame Rubens; at Mainz we had a chat with the Woringens, who went with us to the railway station (Prince Frederic—on his way back from Rome—detained us so long on the road that we very nearly came too late); then there were Schlemmer and his wife fresh from Ems, Julie Schunk-Jeanrenaud (much better) from Dresden, and Rosenhain from Paris, Benecke senior from London, Ditto junior from his property,—all meeting at the gate; such is our life every day!

I must tell you a little more about London and the days after our trip to Manchester. I could not make up my mind to go to Dublin because of the twelve hours' sea journey, the thought of which crushed all my ideas. We spent two peaceful days in Manchester with the uncles and aunts, but as soon as we got back to London the whirl began again. I shall tell you all about it verbally—how disgracefully Cécile carried on with Sir Edward Bulwer, and how old Rogers (Sam Rogers, you know) squeezed her hand and begged

her to bring up her children to be as charming as herself, and to speak English as well (this made a sensation), and how Mr. Roebuck came in (ask Dirichlet who he is),—*à propos*, at Aix-la-Chapelle we paid the Meyers a proper visit, but at Cologne we could only stop twenty minutes, so were unable to look up Louise Hensel,—and how we played charades at the Beneckes', and Klingemann acted a West India planter and Sir Walter Scott, and how the Directors of the Philharmonic gave me a fish dinner at Greenwich with whitebait and speeches, and how they sung my *Antigone* music at the Moscheles' (I must imitate that on the piano for your benefit—I see Beckchen laughing already: but why does she never write?)—and how I waited for Herr von Massow at the Brunswick Hotel, and spoke to Herr Abeken at the Bunsens'—and how we had a great dinner at the Bunsens'—all this I shall describe minutely when I see you; but I must at once tell you all the details of my last visit at Buckingham Palace. I know how it will amuse you, dear mother, and me too.

It is, as Grahl says, the one really pleasant and thoroughly comfortable English house, where one feels *à son aise*. Of course I do know a few others, but yet on the whole I agree with him. Joking apart, Prince Albert had asked me to go to him on Saturday

at two o'clock, so that I might try his organ before I left England; I found him alone, and as we were talking away the Queen came in, also alone, in a simple morning dress. She said she was obliged to leave for Claremont in an hour, and then suddenly interrupting herself exclaimed, "But goodness, what a confusion!" for the wind had littered the whole room, and even the pedals of the organ (which, by the way, made a very pretty feature in the room), with leaves of music from a large portfolio that lay open. As she spoke she knelt down and began picking up the music; Prince Albert helped, and I too was not idle. Then Prince Albert proceeded to explain the stops to me, and she said that she would meanwhile put things straight. I begged that the Prince would first play me something, so that, as I said, I might boast about it in Germany; and he played a Choral, by heart, with the pedals, so charmingly and clearly and correctly that it would have done credit to any professional, and the Queen, having finished her work, came and sat by him and listened and looked pleased. Then it was my turn, and I began my chorus from "St. Paul"—"How lovely are the messengers." Before I got to the end of the first verse they both joined in the chorus, and all the time Prince Albert managed the stops for me so cleverly—first a flute, at the forte the great

organ, at the D major part the whole, then he made a lovely diminuendo with the stops, and so on to the end of the piece, and all by heart—that I was really quite enchanted. Then the young Prince of Gotha came in, and there was more chatting; and the Queen asked if I had written any new songs, and she said she was very fond of singing my published ones. “You should sing one to him,” said Prince Albert; and after a little begging, she said she would try the “Frühlingslied”\* in B flat—“if it is still here,” she added, “for all my music is packed up for Claremont.” Prince Albert went to look for it, but came back, saying it was already packed. “But one might perhaps unpack it,” said I. “We must send for Lady ——,” she said (I did not catch the name). So the bell was rung, and the servants were sent after it, but without success; and at last the Queen went herself, and while she was gone Prince Albert said to me, “She begs you will accept this present as a remembrance,” and gave me a little case with a beautiful ring, on which is engraved “V. R. 1842.” Then the Queen came back and said, “Lady —— is gone, and has taken all my things with her. It really is most annoying.” (You can’t think how that amused me.) I then begged that I might not be made to suffer for the accident,

\* Op. 47, No. 3.

and hoped she would sing another song. After some consultation with her husband he said, "she will sing you something of Gluck's." Meantime the Princess of Gotha had come in, and we five proceeded through various corridors and rooms to the Queen's sitting-room, where there was a gigantic rocking-horse standing near the sofa, and two big bird-cages, and pictures on the walls, and splendidly bound books on the table, and music on the piano. The Duchess of Kent came in too, and while they were all talking I rummaged about amongst the music, and soon discovered my first set of songs. So, of course, I begged her rather to sing one of those than the Gluck, to which she very kindly consented; and which did she choose?—"Schöner und schöner schmückt sich!"\* sung it quite charmingly in strict time and tune, and with very good execution. Only in the line "Der Prosa Lasten und Müh," where it goes down to D, and then comes up again so closely, she sang D sharp each time, and as I gave her the note the two first times, the last time she sang D, and there it ought to have been D sharp. But with the exception of this little mistake it was really charming, and the last long G I have never heard better, or purer, or more natural from any amateur. Then I was obliged to confess that Fanny

\* "Italien"—Op. 8, No. 3.

had written the song (which I found very hard, but pride must have a fall), and beg her to sing one of my own also. If I would give her plenty of help she would gladly try, she said, and then she sang the Pilgerspruch,\* "Lass dich nur," really quite faultlessly, and with charming feeling and expression. I thought to myself, one must not pay too many compliments on such an occasion, so I merely thanked her a great many times; upon which she said, "Oh, if only I had not been so frightened; generally I have such long breath." Then I praised her heartily and with the best conscience in the world; for just that part with the long C at the close she had done so well, taking it and the three notes next to it all in the same breath, as one seldom hears it done—and therefore it amused me doubly that she herself should have begun about it. After this Prince Albert sang the Aerndte-lied,† "Es ist ein Schnitter;" and then he said I must play him something before I went, and gave me as themes the Choral which he had played on the organ and the song he had just sung. If everything had gone as usual, I ought to have improvised dreadfully badly, for it is almost always so with me when I want it to go well, and then I should have gone away vexed with the whole morn-

\* Op. 8, No. 5.

† Op. 8, No. 4.

ing. But, just as if I were to keep nothing but the pleasantest, most charming recollection of it, I never improvised better; I was in the best mood for it and played a long time, and enjoyed it myself so that besides the two themes I brought in the song that the Queen had sung, naturally enough; and it all went off so easily that I would gladly not have stopped; and they followed me with so much intelligence and attention that I felt more at my ease than I ever did in improvising to an audience. She said several times she hoped I would soon come to England again and pay them a visit, and then I took leave, and down below I saw the beautiful carriages waiting, with their scarlet outriders, and in a quarter of an hour the flag was lowered, and the Court Circular announced, "Her Majesty left the palace at twenty minutes past three;" and I went off in the rain to the Klingemanns, and had the double pleasure of pouring out all my news to them and to Cécile.—It was a happy morning.

I must add that I begged the Queen to allow me to dedicate my A minor symphony to her, as that had really been the inducement of my journey, and because the English name on the Scotch piece would look doubly well. Also, I forgot to tell you how just as she was going to begin to sing she said, "But the parrot must go out first, or he will screech louder



than I shall sing ;” upon which Prince Albert rang the bell, and the Prince of Gotha said he would carry it out, and I said “Allow me,” and carried the great cage out, to the astonishment of the servants. There is plenty more to say when we meet ; but if Dirichlet goes and thinks me a little aristocrat because of this long history, I swear I am more radical than ever, and call to witness Grote, Roebuck, and you, my dear little mother, who will be as much amused by all these details as I am myself.

As I am in the midst of descriptions I must speak of one thing more—how after a splendid crossing we heard in the night that we were only half an hour from Ostend, and I went up on deck and found a calm grey sea, morning just breaking, lovely stars, and the steamer making straight for the lighthouse, which gleamed out all white and bright, with a couple of red and yellow lights down below to show where the pier was ; and England lay behind us, and the Continent, which is also beautiful, before us.

On the Rhine we unhappily received the terrible news from France. No doubt you also, like all of us, were deeply grieved at the young man’s\* sad fate.

\* Louis Philippe’s eldest son, the Duke of Orleans, killed at Neuilly by the overturning of his carriage, on the 13th of July, 1842.

With James I did not make acquaintance (and I confess my ignorance unwillingly), and saw his name for the first time in your letter.

Again I say a thousand, thousand thanks for your dear letter, and I beg and pray for more and for many. I am no flatterer when I say what a delight such a letter from you is for all of us, and how earnestly we long for speedy and frequent news from you,—it is the truth. Do give us this pleasure as often as you possibly can, dear mother. Give my best love to all at home (I mean my sisters and brother, and brothers-in-law, and nephews), and tell them to think nicely of me and to write to me sometimes. Hoping for a happy meeting,

I am always, dear Mother, your

FELIX.

(3.) *To HERR* \_\_\_\_\_.\*

(Translation.)

LEIPZIG, *April 2, 1843.*

MY DEAR SIR,

A thousand thanks for your kind letter, and for the fact of your being one of those people who do not look upon the memories of pleasant times and happy days as dead, but rather as a living and active influence, just as I do with my whole heart, and have

\* The original has neither name nor address.

insisted on all my life ! Every little circumstance which you mention, and a vast number of smaller ones besides, such as the places we sat in at Erard's, and the lights which were burned at the Baillot-Soirée, and the parts on the blue paper, and the tea which we drank before it began—all this came upon me as if it were yesterday, when I got your letter with its greetings from happy past times. It is just because such things remain so unforgotten, so dear and precious to me, and because most people like to forget the past in the present, that I am doubly glad when some one thinks as I do, and takes the past with the present, and rejoices in it—and so I thank you with all my heart for your letter ; and especially for the dear kind remembrance which you have kept of me with all these details, and for the assurance that you have not lost the good friendship of those days for me, and will not lose it. That it is the same with me you know very well, and so I join with you most heartily in the wish that we may soon meet one another once again in the world and be happy together. Then we will revel in all the recollections of that Paris life, and see who can outdo the other in them, and above all we will add others to them, new and delightful ones of the time being, and make new experiences which shall also last out their twelve years, fresh and vivid. Only let it be soon,

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whether in Leipzig, or at Ausbach, or on the way anywhere else about in Germany.—Herr Dürrner, whose talent I value very highly, I have unfortunately seen but once here, and that for a very short time. My winter-months are so completely filled up with work, both public and private, that I do not have the least time for social intercourse. So I shall enjoy it all the more after Easter, when all my public duties cease for six months. I rejoice immensely in that time, and hope that I may then see a great deal of Herr Dürrner, and get to know his compositions thoroughly, and become as intimately acquainted with him and his music as a superficial acquaintance has already made me wish to be. I also hope to hear plenty more details from him about you and your life there, and then he will be able to report to you about me and my life. But the best thing, as I said before, would be that we should do it for ourselves, and so be able to judge at once with our own eyes.

In the hope that this wish may soon be fulfilled, and with many thanks for your kind remembrances and friendly letter, I must close this, and remain, with great respect, always yours faithfully,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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## II.

(4.) *To* W. STERNDALE BENNETT, ESQ.\*

(Original.)

LEIPZIG, *April 3, 1839.*

. . . . You are now in the middle of your London season, with concerts, foreigners, businesses &c. of every kind and you will be giddy and occupied enough I dare say; and yet I write these lines in order to increase your occupations if possible, to add a new trouble to those that already surround you, in short to ask a question—perhaps also a favour. You will recollect that I had a mind to publish some of Handel's Scores, viz. in the original shape, and only with a written Organ part of mine, for those that do not know how to accompany that sort of music on the organ. . . . . Since your departure Breitkopf and Härtel have readily undertaken to publish three oratorios in Score as a beginning and to go on with it if the Public takes interest in the matter.

Now after I looked over my Arnold's Edition I find it so full of mistakes so far from accurate in the details that it is impossible to give a new edition without comparing the manuscripts which are in your King's

\* From the original in the possession of Sir W. Sterndale Bennett.

(or Queen's) library and the other editions of Handel which may exist. My Question then is: will you do me the favor to assist me in that undertaking, by looking over the M.S. in those parts which appear doubtful in Arnold's Edition, by comparing the other editions when the M.S. does not explain the questioned passages, or by asking advice of those English musicians whom you think best acquainted with Handelian music and spirit, if the matter still remains undecided. I know your kindness and that if you are not too occupied and your time not too much taken up by the season you will answer in the affirmative. Allow me then to add a few questions which the perusal of Arnold's score of Samson (which is to be amongst the three) suggested to my mind, and which you would greatly oblige me in answering. I saw the original of Samson in the King's library in 1829 and Mr. Anderson gave me then the permission to look it over and take memoranda.

I. Are the Cyphers (how do you call it?, Bezifferung, the numbers that indicate the chords in the bass part) Handel's or whose else?

Are there any Cyphers in the manuscript?

II. Do you ever play the organ in England to Handel's overtures, as for instance to that of Samson?

III. In some oratorios I find songs and recitatives

which are evidently not to be sung one after the other, but only composed to give a choice to the singer so that only one out of many must be performed. Several instances occur in Arnold's Edition of the Messiah. But also in Samson there are many songs which seem rather out of keeping, and some repetitions which look as if they were only to give a choice, not to be performed one after the other. Are there any proofs of the truth of this to be found in the manuscript? For instance in the beginning where the three airs are in A, D, and B minor, with the chorus in D are repeated three times, seem rather doubtful? But more so the two dead marches, one after the other, one in C and one in D? Is there no indication which was the original one? Also the repetition of the Chorus of Virgins page 89 of Arnold, after it came in already page 88. Also (but for other reasons) Dalila's songs page 79 and 91; also the Recitative, 6th Bar, page 30; Song page 40; ditto page 61; 62; 69 and 70; and page 97 &c. &c. &c.

IV. Is there no indication of "Presto" in Handel's handwriting in the chorus "O first created beam" when the words "to thy dark servant" begin?

V. Is there another edition of the Score of Samson than Arnold's?

VI. In page 46 of Arn. Ed. there are the 4 beginning bars of the Recit. without Accomp.; it comes

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afterwards in, nobody knows how. Is that also the case in the manuscript?

And if you find other things which strike you when comparing the MS. with the printed Copy pray let me know them.

Now excuse all that trouble and let me have an answer as soon as possible. Tell me how you are, now you find yourself in England again. . . .

I shall stay here till the 23rd of this month; from then till the end of May direct any communications to Düsseldorf, poste restante; from the beginning of June to Frankfort, poste restante. . . . Farewell.

F. M. B.

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(5.) *To G. A. MACFARREN, ESQ., London.*


(Original.)

LEIPZIG, 2nd April, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have expected a letter from me, and I one from you; for at the conclusion of your last you said you would look out once more for your Overture and send me word, as soon as you had found it. I thought it impossible that such a work should have been lost entirely, and waited every day for the score or some



news from you—and now it seems you did the same. When I did not hear from you, I tried to bring out the Symphony in one of our last Concerts, but as I suspected, when I first wrote to you, there was some opposition from the Directors, merely because there had been four new Symphonies in the course of the last two months, and they did so much that I was obliged to postpone it until the beginning of the next season, although it was half copied already. I am sorry you feel disappointed by the delay, but it was not in my power to help it. Meanwhile I must repeat what I said in my first letter—if you *had* an Overture I am sure it would be a better beginning for this public and these Concerts, than a Symphony. Ask Bennett, who knows the place, and who will certainly concur in this opinion. And if you could accordingly let us have an Overture *before* the Symphony, I am sure the last would be much better understood and received by the public, even if there had not been such a quantity of new native Symphonies beforehand, as there has been this year. You tell me, you never wrote an Overture to Rob Roy. But did I dream of it, or what else can it be? for I recollect the key, D major, the time 6-8, recollect that I saw it published, arranged as a duet, that it began with this rhythm:  &c., that on the first page of music was printed once more

the title—Overture to &c. by A. Macfarren—now can I have invented, or dreamt all this? I wish I was right and you would send it or anything else like it,—for I liked it very much, and so would the people here.\*

And as for my not writing, you must never be angry with me for that, or I should be afraid of losing your good opinion very soon. I often live many months without being able to write a letter, sometimes also without an hour of leisure for doing so, and all my friends know it and must bear with it, for it is stronger than I am. Ask Bennett also in this respect.

And as for those good friends of yours who think, as you say, that English music is a thing which cannot be endured in Germany, and that a work of yours would be here like an apparition of two moons,—pray ask them to wait a few months, before they repeat an opinion equally creditable to us and to you, or pray tell them in my name that they are sadly mistaken, and that the event will soon prove them to be so.

I wish I could write much longer, but again I cannot, and can only assure you that I shall always remain

Yours very truly,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

\* Mendelssohn here refers to the Overture to Chevy Chase, which was performed on the 1st November following. See the next letter.

(6.) *To the Same.*

(Original.)

LEIPZIG, 20th Nov., 1843.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am going to leave Leipzig in a few days with wife and children, and chairs and tables and Piano and everything. And while I think of the duties I have still to fulfil as part of the direction of the Abonnement-Concerts, I feel that I must write a few words to you, although I charged Mr. Wessel some time ago to do so in my name. I must tell you that your Overture went very well and was most cordially and unanimously received by the public; that the amateurs hailed it as a work which promised them a great many treats to come, and which gave them such a treat already in itself; that the orchestra played it with true delight and enthusiasm; in short that it is sure to be a favourite with all of them. I rehearsed and conducted it with the utmost care; but now I am going to Berlin and shall not have the pleasure of introducing some of your other Pieces to the Public this winter. But I left the whole of your music with the Concert-Directors (in the hands of Mr. H. C. Schleinitz) who will forward it back to you after the end of the season, and they promised me that they will bring out at least one of your other works, if not several in

the course of this winter. Most probably it will be the Symphony, of which the parts are half copied already.

God bless you, my dear Sir; excuse these hasty lines; they pack up all my things and I am in a black, or at least greyish mood. Yes, God bless you from all my heart, and be as happy in your life and in your art as I shall always wish you to be! Very truly yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(7.) *To the Same.*

(Original.)

4, HOBART PLACE, EATON SQUARE,  
*June 6th, 1844.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I need not tell you with how great a pleasure I would have played your Sonata\* to-morrow, if I possibly could—for I hope you know this. And you also know that it is with true and sincere regret that I must say I am not able to undertake the task which you propose me. During the bustle of the last weeks I have not yet been able to become acquainted with your Sonata; the whole of this day and of to-morrow morning is taken up with different musical and un-

\* "Ma cousine;" second Sonata (for Pianoforte solo in A); dedicated to Miss Emma Bendixen, by G. Alexander Mac'arren.

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musical engagements and accordingly I would hardly have an hour till to-morrow night to play your Sonata over. This I cannot think sufficient, and I would not be able to do it justice *in my own eyes*. Do not misunderstand me and take this for false modesty; I know very well that I should be able to-morrow to play it through without stopping and perhaps without wrong notes; but I attach too much importance to any public performance to believe that sufficient, and unless I am myself thoroughly acquainted with a Composition of such importance and compass I would never venture to play it in public. Once more I need not tell you how much I regret it, for you must know it very well.

Mr. Davison told me the Concert was now to begin with my Trio.\* I shall therefore be punctually with you to-morrow evening at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8. I beg you will arrange about having a *good* Piano of Erard's at the room; they know there already which I like best.

Always very sincerely yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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The performance of Mendelssohn's Antigone which formed the occasion of the following letter

\* In D minor: Op. 49.

took place early in 1845 at Covent Garden Theatre, where that work was produced for the first time in this country, under the musical direction of Mr. G. A. Macfarren. The enterprise was perfectly successful, and the piece ran thirty nights, only stopping with the termination of the season.

(8.) *To the Same.*

(Original.)

MY DEAR SIR,

FRANKFURT, *8th December, 1844.*

Your letter came two days before my departure from Berlin, and immediately after it I received the news of the very very sore illness of my youngest child, which called me in great haste back to this place, where I had left my family. The child continues very ill, and the physicians give us but a very faint hope; they say that if it recovers it can only be very slowly, and may last many months, so I need not beg your pardon for not having answered punctually, although the object of your letter was of great musical importance to me. But I say the same words as you do at the end of your letter; and although I love my art, more from my heart indeed than words can say,

there are other things before which even that love must vanish and be silent. Do not let me add another word. . . .

Have many thanks for the interest you take in bringing out my music to the Antigone-Choruses; I am very glad it is in your hands, because it wants a musician like you to make it go as intended—quite as a subordinate part of the whole, as a mere link in the chain of the poem, and yet perfectly clear and independent in itself. I am glad you have so many Chorus-singers; I think they will be necessary in your large Theatre. I hope you will also have them placed not on the stage but in the place where usually the Orchestra is, viz. before the stage, so as it was in Berlin, Dresden, &c., and I believe also at Paris. It enhances the effects of the voices, the distinctness of the words, and the beauty of the scenery most wonderfully. Pray let them pronounce the words as distinctly as possible, so as to make the notes *less* prominent and the words *more* so, than they usually are in Opera-Choruses. Then let the succession of Dialogue and Music be as rapid as possible, indeed quite without the least interruption or pause; for instance when the curtain rises and Antigone has appeared, has called her sister and brought her forward from the background, it must be the last bar but one of the Overture, so that imme-

diately after the last chord of the wind instruments (G ♯) Antigone begins to speak *while* the chord is still kept. Again the first Chorus must begin as soon as Antigone has gone down the steps (not immediately after Ismene's last words of course), and Kreon must be seen immediately when the C major chord, *fortissimo*, comes down before the Recitative of the Choruses, and Kreon must again begin to speak while the chord E flat is hardly given, and it must be kept during the first words—and so on throughout the whole. I wish the effect of the whole music to be very lively and yet not too fast, and very majestic and yet not slow. This applies also particularly to the Chorus-*Recitatives*, which if sung by a whole mass of voices are of a good effect, but they must not drag them, they must not sing them in time, nor waver in their way of delivering them; it must be as if they all did speak the words and understand the meaning now faster now slower as the meaning requires it and never in a dragging and tiresome way; for instance the Recitative at the end of the 2nd Chorus it must be delivered with great energy, and as fast as a single singer would sing the same words—and so all of them. If you have but one of your Solo singers who sings Recitatives well and in a *truly dramatic* way, you will easily make the whole Chorus



follow him, and after few Rehearsals they will do it altogether and by themselves. In the Melodramas, where the words must go together with the notes (with Flutes and Clarinets, &c.), do not let the actress take the tempo of your music (as I heard them do lately at Dresden), but let the flutes accompany *her* tempo of speaking, which is also not difficult if the flutes will follow *you* and *her*. When the Chorus answers the speaker in the Melodramas again there must not be the least interruption or pause, and their singing must come in immediately after the last word spoken, while the preceding chord of the Orchestra must already have been heard during the last phrase. Then there is the *acting* of the choruses, which is still important. They must but very seldom (as for instance during the Solo in Quartet in G) be *quite* without motion, and then also they must stand in *groups*, *not* in the usual theatrical *rows*; but this I hope will have been well managed in France, from where you have the direction I believe. For example, at the beginning of Chorus 1, the singers must not be seen before the 1st chord, then they must come two by two, while they sing the beginning and must wander quickly round the altar during the whole of the 4-4, but when the 2-4 begins they must be in their places; and the singers of the 2d chorus must also not be seen, but after the end of this 2-4, when they

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come in quite in the same way and do the same as the others &c. &c. The acting of the Chorus to Bacchus in D must be very lively towards the end, when those who sing "Hear us, Bacchus" must always wave their sticks and even go up the steps of the altar the last time, while the others who continue with the other words may stand in a row in front (in the background) until their turn comes to sing "Hear us, Bacchus," when the order is reversed, until it ends with a very animated group round the Altar, which is disturbed by the messenger &c. &c.

Pray excuse this long analysis; but you would have it! And as for Israel and the other copy of the works, do you not think you could find an opportunity for sending them to me at this place! I intend to stay here till next Autumn, if all goes as I wish it; and there are so many of your countrymen, who visit this part of Germany! I also hope to send you the King of Saxony's name as a Subscriber to the Society very shortly, but I must have a prospectus first, and could not get one at Dresden. Pray send me one, and I hope to arrange the matter directly and easily. Did your negotiations with Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel about the Handel Society lead to no result?

But enough. Believe me always yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

III.

The following seven letters refer to the Full Score of Handel's "Israel in Egypt," which Mendelssohn edited, with an Organ part of his own, for the "Handel Society"—instituted in April 1843. Mendelssohn collated an old printed copy of "Israel" with the autograph of the work at Buckingham Palace, wrote the proposed organ part, arranged a pianoforte accompaniment for use in the absence of the orchestra, and submitted the complete copy to the Council of the Society on the 8th of July, 1845. During the correction of the proofs, the Council were very persistent in requiring uniformity as to details with those that had already been issued. One of these points resulted in the following minute, dated June 30, 1864:—"Letters were produced from Sir H. Bishop, Signor Pistrucci, and Count Pepoli; and several other authorities were adduced as to the gender and the con-

struction of the plural of the word 'Oboe.'" It was consequently resolved, "That the authorities before the meeting leave no doubt that the word 'Oboe' is masculine, and that the termination of the plural is the same as the singular. The word shall therefore be always thus employed in the future productions of the Society, and the instances where it has been hitherto falsely declined shall be corrected in the plates." In Letter No. 11 Mendelssohn alludes to this important subject, which had been long under discussion.

(9.) *To the* HANDEL SOCIETY.

(Original.)

FRANKFORT, 1st March, 1845.

GENTLEMEN,

Yesterday I received the King of Saxony's answer, saying that he will become a subscriber to the Handel Society, and that he has sent an order to his Embassy in London to pay the annual subscription for him. Most probably they will also forward the copies of those works that are already published and of the future publications to the King.

Some months ago when my friend Klingemann passed by this place I had just received a letter from Messrs. Breitkopf & Härtel about the Handel Society, stating the difficulty of getting the copies over without much expence to the subscribers, and that this was the great drawback to the undertaking in Germany. I talked the matter over with my friend, and asked him whether Mr. Bunsen, the Prussian Ambassador, who is himself one of Handel's greatest admirers, and has so often opportunities for sending large packages and parcels to this country, could not find a way for sending copies belonging to German subscribers to *some* place in Germany, either Hamburgh, or Cologne, or any other (for the postage from *there* would be no matter). My friend thought it very probable that Mr. Bunsen might offer his assistance in such a way and I thought it my duty to inform you of this, and leave it to you, whether you will talk over this matter with Mr. Klingemann (4, Hobart Place, Eaton Square) and enquire *through him* at Mr. Bunsen's, which I think better than a direct question. At any rate Mr. Bunsen would forward those copies which belong to the King of Prussia, and the Cathedral Society at Berlin (and also pay the subscription for these two, I dare say). They were ordered by *Count Redern*, to whom I applied for it at Berlin.

Finally let me ask you to send me the proofs of

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Israel in Egypt, if you possibly can, in the course of the next 3 months. I remain here till July and have much leisure to correct them accurately just now, besides it is much easier for you to send them over here than to any other place in Germany where I may go to hereafter.

I therefore hope you will comply with my request if you possibly can, and am, Gentlemen,

Your most Obedient Servant,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(10.) *To WILLIAM STERNDALE BENNETT, ESQ.\**

(Translation.)

FRANKFURT A.M. 26 *May* 1845.

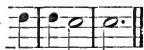
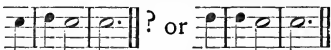
MY DEAR BENNETT,

Many thanks for your kind letter—ach nein, ich will lieber Deutsch schreiben. [The letter then proceeds in German, of which the following is a translation.]

Now I have a request, dear Bennett, with which I certainly ought not to come in the middle of a London Season, but which I still make because I hope you are not too much worried, and you will do me a great

\* From the original in the possession of Sir W. Sterndale Bennett.

kindness thereby. Would you get Mr. Anderson to show you Handel's original MS. of Israel in Egypt,\* and look at a few notes in it about which I am doubtful, and write me a line about it? These doubtful notes are as follows:—(1) In the Hailstone Chorus, the first note which the *second trumpet has to play*, is it in Handel A or G? (2) In the third chorus after that, "But as for his people," *the fourth note before the close*, is it in the viola D or E?



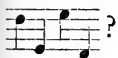
(3) In the following chorus, "Egypt was glad," *in the sixth bar before the close*, is the second violin so



or



(4) In the chorus, "But the waters overwhelmed them," *the second note in the 9th bar before the close*, is it in the second violin D or E flat?



If it is possible for you, pray answer me these four questions—but don't be angry with me. When I think of your Concert on the 24th of June I declare I would rather withdraw my whole request. . . .

Hoping that we may soon meet again,

Always your

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

\* In the Royal Library at Buckingham Palace.

(II.) *To G. A. MACFARREN, ESQ.*

(Original.)

LEIPZIG, *28th September 1845.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I received the proofs of the 2nd Act of Israel, the day before yesterday (with your letter dated 6th July) and as you referred me in your letter of the 2nd Sept. to these proofs, I was not able to return an answer before I had received them. Now I receive to-day your last letter of the 22nd, and hasten to write, although my leisure time of this summer is now over, and I can only write in great hurry, which I beg you will excuse.

The alterations of which you tell me may be made, as they relate to mere matters of form, and I will alter the Preface accordingly. Therefore the titles of the several pieces may stand as a heading to each in the 1st Act, in the same manner you have marked in the proofs of the 2nd. Then the footnotes page 1, 22 and 192 may be expunged and I shall confine them (and those I may have to make still for the 2nd Act) to the preface. The Hautboys may also be called girls instead of boys, although the Dictionary which I carefully consulted before I made the correction most distinctly said the word Oboe was masculine. Never mind all these



things, and you may have the 1st part printed as soon as you like.

But pray *be sure* that no more alterations be introduced, and at any rate *not one* with which I am not *previously acquainted*, (may they relate to matters of form or not, to the text of the music or to the PREFACE).

I am busily correcting the proofs of the 2nd Act every free hour I can find. I hope to have done with it in the course of next week, and shall then immediately send it to Mess. Hüttner at Hamburgh for Mr. Buxton, your Auditor.

I have only time to add my best thanks for the great trouble you have again taken on my account with the 2nd part, but I shall write you at length (particularly an answer to the last part of your letter, which interests me very much and which I shall endeavour to answer at once satisfactorily) and privately when I send back the 2d. part proofs. Excuse these hasty lines;

Always yours very truly,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(12.) *To the Same.*

(Original.)

LEIPZIG, *October 1845.*



MY DEAR SIR,

I have finished the corrections of the 2d part of Israel, and send it to you with this letter. There are so many faults in it, that a good and exact edition can only be obtained if you will have the kindness to use the utmost care in examining the places where the corrections are made in the plates. I hope you will do me this favour; for if not I should despair of the edition becoming a good one, and should consider the time which I devoted to it (and now even with much difficulty) as entirely lost, or worse than that. There are many places where the engraver arbitrarily deviated from the copy which I prepared with the greatest care for this edition, and where these deviations become faults. This is the case on the very first page of the second part; as it stands engraved, nobody could guess that the "Organo" is meant to play the first C, and to have the subsequent pauses; besides on the 2nd page the staff for the "Organo" would come in without an inscription, and nobody would know what it means; then the 1st page would look as if the Violoncelli had to play those notes alone, and the Contra-Bassi only

the first C—in short the whole thing is one confusion,—is *wrong* by the deviation from the old copy which is quite distinct and right. This will be easily altered, but a more difficult and expensive alteration will be necessary for the Chorus, “And I will exalt him,” p. 197-208. I wrote the reasons why I cannot allow this deviation under the beginning of that Chorus; the mistake at the beginning and page 203, 204, &c., are quite ridiculous, and as much as I regret to give the engraver and the Society so much trouble I cannot help it, and he must engrave it with *one line* (for Organo and Bassi) while he must engrave the first page of the second part with *two lines*. Another correction which I had to make through the whole of the Oratorio, and which I cannot allow to stand, although it *seems* most insignificant, is the constant use of slurs which the engraver always placed over two notes (quavers or semi-quavers generally) which are to be sung on one word (for instance page 216, bar 4, 6, 8, page 340, bar 2, &c.). I say it *seems* insignificant, but it IS NOT, as I am sure that slurs are used in such cases (in ancient, particularly in Bach's and Handel's, music) as a characteristic sign for the expression, much as we would use this sign :



If such a pause is *not* meant, they do not place the slur over the notes, because it is *quite*

*unnecessary*, the manner of uniting the quavers and semiquavers (, instead of ) indicating clearly enough that they are to be sung on the same syllable. Another thing which must be carefully done is to add always "by the Editor," to that part of "Organo" which is *mine*; if this is omitted, the misunderstandings which already exist about Handel's Organ parts will be increased to a most fearful extent, notwithstanding the explanation in the Preface: people will believe he has written two, or he has written mine, or he has written none, or I do not know what. Therefore pray be sure this explanation is *never* omitted in the score (also not in the first part, I hope, where I carefully added it when I corrected it). Many faults have also occurred in the Pianoforte adaptation; although I did not receive the Original of this I believe that the greater part of them are *my* faults not the engraver's, and I beg his and your pardon for it, but hope nevertheless that they will be most carefully corrected. The same with the Organo (by the Editor) of which I did not receive the most important pieces (inlaid leaves) and which I wish to be as correct as possible, because I bear the responsibility of it.

Now, my dear Sir, I come to those places where you indicated to me the suggestions of the Council. I wrote

my answers under your remarks to save time, but I beg you *will erase the whole* (remarks and answers) before you give the Copy into the Engraver's hands, because I really should not like anybody but you to become acquainted with these things. Indeed the reasons I give are most especially *for you* and for nobody else, and if *that* had not been the case, I would have plainly said that so and so was my opinion, (because nobody shared the responsibility of an Edition which bears my name). It was painful to me not to be able to agree with the Council in some of their suggestions, you will see in looking over the Preface (as altered now) that I have done whatever I could, in introducing all those alterations which relate to the English language (of which I cannot judge) and others which have, to my opinion, the greater probability. But in those cases in which I am of a different opinion I *could not* adopt the reading of the Council (although the difference may only consist in trifles) and as I have not been able to change my opinion in these cases, after duly considering and sincerely wishing it, I beg the Corrections will stand as marked by me in this Copy.

Indeed I must rely on your complying with this wish of mine, for I cannot give my name to anything (and if it was but a trifling thing) which I do not consider right and true myself at that moment. The same is the case

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with the Preface. I have altered as much as I could ; if other things must still be altered for the sake of a good English style (although nobody expects such a thing from me) tell me so, and we will again correspond on this eternal and not very pleasant and musical subject. But do not introduce in the Preface nor in the Score any alterations with which I did not agree, and which I have not seen first.

I heartily hope you might say "Yes" at once to these my requests, and we might *not* be forced again into this sort of unmusical Correspondence which we both equally dislike, I am sure, and which I should be *most* happy to see at an end.

Very truly yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(13.) *To the Same.*

(Original.)

LEIPSIK, 31 Dec. 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received your letter this day week and it is already several days since I sent my answer by way of Hamburgh under your direction to Mess. Ewer & Co. I send this letter now by post, that you may have it still sooner if possible. My answer to your former questions

is contained in detail in the Hamburg letter. To the words about "the narrative which forms the subject" I have no objection and they may be inserted at the head of *the text* of the Oratorio (but not in the Score, or else you must write "Council," or "Ed." or what you like under it). But enough.

Many, many good wishes for your Opera! May it succeed and give you and your friends pleasure and many happy hours in 1846 and 1856 and so on!

Always yours very truly,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(14.) *To the Same.*

(Original)

LEIPSIK, 3rd April, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR,

The businesses (musical and others) with which I am surrounded here are so numerous that I am totally unable to write letters. I therefore delivered your enclosures to the Editors here, and in a letter, which I had to write to Mr. Buxton, requested him to answer those points of your letter which you now repeat to me. I do not understand why Mr. Buxton did not communicate to you my answer as I wrote it to him, and I write

now in great haste the same to you. You may send the money in *any* (safe) way you like—it is not for me to name any and I leave it to you—if I should propose one it would be, to pay it to Mr. Buxton who could then have it paid at Hamburgh to my brother's house, as he often did—but any other way is equally agreeable to me. If you have the impression that I wished or consented to become a Member of the Handel Society, then of course you may deduct three Guineas for three years subscription but I beg at the same time you will send the publications of these 3 years to Mr. Buxton to keep them for me, as I did not receive one volume till now. The reasons why you want me to be a subscriber are very flattering and I thank you for saying so, but I can only repeat what I wrote already to you on that subject—that I have already one complete edition and very many single volumes of Handel's works, and that I therefore do not intend to have, nor indeed can I find room for a third Edition in my library. It would therefore not be consistent with truth if my name was kept in future on the subscribers' lists, without my having subscribed in reality, which, (I must repeat it) I am not able to do. . . . . I am my dear Sir, very truly yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.



(15.) *To the Same.*

(Original.)

LEIPZIG, 28 *December* 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

I hasten to reply to your letter (which you wrote to me as Secretary of the Handel Society) and which I received yesterday. Have many, many thanks for the trouble you take in correcting and recorrecting the proofs of Israel in Egypt as you have done; but this obligation I have, (if I am not mistaken) to Mr. Macfarren, and not to the Secretary, and my thanks to you I hope to express better in another and more pleasant letter than this can be.

As I told you in my last letter I wish to end the communications I have had with “the Council” on this subject, and am therefore very glad you tell me that the 6 points about which you question me are to be settled *among us two*, and not to be brought again before any Council. *I rely on your word* in this assurance, for if this was not the case I would only say that I expressed my opinion in my last letter (*viz.* to give way to everything which regards the English language or my personal authority, and in *none* which regards Handel’s authority.) But as *we* have to settle it, I go

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most willingly through the six points. Pray let it be the last time that I must correspond on this subject.

1. Instead of 'pauses in the Contrabassi' say 'rests' and instead of 'lay before the public' say 'the members' or 'the Society' as you think best.

2. The double bar after the Chorus 'He is my God' must *stand* if it is in Handel's manuscript, and *fall* if it is not in it (for I will neither add nor take out anything for 'uniformity's sake'); I corrected the first (Arnold's) Copy, after which this new Copy was engraved note by note, after Handel's manuscript. If then the double bar is in this (Arnold's) Copy, I think it probable that the same is the case in Handel's. But if you will compare this last, which you can easily I fancy, you will greatly oblige me, and the matter will be settled at once.

3. I am sorry to have given you the trouble of copying out the bass parts of the Chorus "I will exalt him." But I must repeat what I said in my last letter, and none of the reasons you can tell me can satisfy me to go against Handel's manuscript in this case. The rests at the beginning (in the *Bass* part) could be placed there without any doubt, as Handel writes at the beginning 'senza Violins and Bassoons' (although he does *not* mention the *Violoncelli*)—but in the middle of the Chorus, the *Violoncelli* and Bassoons (*Fagotti*) might most probably be meant to play the same (*Tenore &c.*)

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notes as the Organ (at least I, for one, would make them play them)—and therefore the rests are *not* justified those. Pray then let the plates be re-engraved.

4. The same with regard to the Contra-bassi at the end of "Thou didst blow," viz. let it be engraved as in Handel's manuscript (in the corrected (Arnold) copy) *without* these Contrabassi. *I know* that the custom is in England to let them play the last Symphony,—but in Germany it is customary to let them play the same thing *throughout the whole Song*, wherever the subject is repeated, (almost continually then) and I like the "effect" of it very much. Who is right? Why not adopt the German reading as well as the English? *I cannot* decide it. Handel is right most probably.

5. I will not write Trombone parts. I wish not to prolong the Correspondence, as I told you, or else I should be tempted to tell you my candid opinion of this "Trombone"-decision of the Council, which you now communicated to me. Perhaps I shall do so in a letter which I shall soon write to you, (not to the Secretary, but the musician).

6. Announce my name without any titles at all.

And now let me not add another word but merely say that I am and remain very truly yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

## III.

(16.) *To the* HOFRATH FRIEDRICH ROCHLITZ, *Leipsic.\**

(Translation.)

DÜSSELDORF, *February 25, 1835.*

HOCHGEEHRTER HERR HOFRATH,

I am very much obliged to you for your last kind letter, and for the announcement it brings me of the fulfilment of what was formerly but an uncertain hope, as well as for the distinction you have awarded me above other composers,—which is for me the greatest pleasure and honour. You must be aware what a gift you bestow on a musician in such a work, and can therefore imagine how very grateful I am to you for it. The Oratorio on which I am now occupied, will, please God, be finished in about three months; and as soon as I have taken breath again for so important a task, and have finished some things which I must undertake directly afterwards, I shall be delighted to begin another work of the kind. It is true this may not be before next winter, but you say yourself that it need not be written immediately, so I accept your kindness with the utmost gratitude, and am now all eagerness to get your

\* Autograph in the possession of Madame Preusser, daughter of Rochlitz, and an old and valued friend of Mendelssohn.

next letter, and hear what your subject is. Pray do not leave me long in uncertainty, for what you say about it only makes my impatience the greater; and if the subject be in itself attractive to me, there is hardly any doubt but that your treatment of it must make it still more so.

The subject of my present Oratorio is "St. Paul." It begins with his presence at Stephen's trial; and this, with his persecution of the Church and his conversion as far as the conversation with Ananias, forms the first part; the chief points in his after life—the conversion of the heathen, the worship offered him at Lystra, his imprisonment with Silas, the parting with the elders at Ephesus—constitute the second and last part. It is compiled throughout entirely from the Bible words, and whilst writing it I have felt with renewed pleasure how forcible, how exhaustive, and how harmonious the Scripture language is for music. There is an inimitable force in it, and a rhythm which has often seemed of itself to suggest the music to me. I hope to hear my music for the first time this autumn in Frankfort, performed by the "*Cäcilien-Verein*;" and even though I may find plenty of things in it which I should have to avoid in yours, and many errors and faults, I look forward to it with all my heart. But enough of this, and now I will only add a request for an early answer,

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which I await with the greatest impatience. Pray receive again my best thanks for your kindness, and accept the esteem and respect of yours faithfully,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(17.) *To MR. J. ALFRED NOVELLO, London.\**

(Original.)

LEIPZIG, 7th April, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,

I gave Colonel Chatterton's bandmaster the money, according to your wishes, and hope he arrived in your country, and found his way through the difficulties he must have met with by sea and by land, to Manchester.

I wish I could send you the wished-for composition of the set of words you sent me; but it is altogether impossible for me to do anything in the way of prize composition; I cannot do it, if I would force myself to it; and when I was compelled to do so, when a boy, in competition with my sister and fellow-scholars, my works were always wonders of stupidity—not the tenth part of what I could do otherwise. I think that is the

\* From the original in possession of Mr. Novello. Some words in the letter are now illegible.

reason why I felt afterwards such an antipathy to prize-fighting in music, that I made a rule never to participate in it. Excuse me therefore, I should like to do as you wish me if I possibly could.

Breitkopf and Härtel will send you the Pianoforte arrangement of my Psalm\* in very short time, and write you about it. They wish to print the full score with the English words, as I think you will publish it in England. Send them the English translation as soon as you have it. I looked at the English Bible and found the words would do with some alteration. These of course must be cleverly made, and at all events I wish you will stick to the words of the Bible as much as you can. Show Mr. Klingemann the translation before you adopt it. I think you will like this Psalm.

As for my old Service which you will publish at present . . . I beg you will write once more about it if you want it, as I must copy it out afresh and could bring it with me and hand it over to you at Cologne. Now you really must come to Cologne,† and your plan of bringing . . . with you and of accepting the prospect of music and . . . is most excellent. Pray do come ; I am so sure you will care for the music. I do not know yet how the performance will go off; we have the

\* The 42nd Psalm—"As the hart pants." (Op. 42.)

† For the Lower-Rhine music-festival of 1838.

whole festival made up of seldom-performed music ; but there is a glorious Cantata of [Sebastian Bach's] amongst the number, with a double chorus in it, which would repay for the journey by itself. And the Rheinwein, and [besides] that the whole Oratorio of Joshua. [Bach's] new Cantata and Cologne's old Cathedral and the gay green Rhein, I hope you will not resist all these attractions and be sure to come over ; and a most hearty welcome you shall have. My wife's best compliments ; my boy is a wonderful creature for eating and sleeping, crying into the bargain ; but in excellent health which is the best of all.

I am always very truly yours,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

(18.) *To* HERR ANTON ZUCCALMAGLIO.

(Translation.)

LEIPZIG, *December 4, 1839.*

HOCHGEEHRTER HERR,

I have long wanted to write and thank you for your kind letter, and for the beautiful poem, which has been in my hands since the end of September. Pray forgive this long delay ; in intention I have written to you many a time, long since, but my days here have



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been far too full of interruptions of all sorts, both private and public, pleasant and unpleasant, to allow of my doing it actually.

Now that things are a little quieter my first object is to thank you heartily for all your kindness, especially for this new proof of it, which has given me much pleasure. Your subject is very poetic and beautiful, and your idea of the opposing voices, of the warriors and the maidens, and the disappearance of the latter and their concealment in the rock, is capitally worked out. But I have one objection; it seems to me that in the poem the moment of the actual transformation does not stand out clearly enough, at least one does not clearly understand what becomes of the church and her protégés; and I confess that I cannot quite make out your meaning as to the end of the maidens (in the poem, I mean) whether they are enclosed in the rock, or whether through the transformation they are lifted up "to the gates of Heaven." Or perhaps my objection springs from the whole form of the poem, and could only be removed by a visible transformation? Anyhow I believe even one verse might help to make it clearer; but what do you think?

I would gladly have sent you some music instead of this tiresome letter, but I have so little time to myself in the winter. The Concerts and the whole way of life

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take up more time and leisure than I expected, and I am glad enough if in my spare time I can but manage to clear up my unfinished work, leaving the beginning of new things for the summer months, which thus become doubly delightful. Is there any chance of your coming to see us again soon? and for longer than last time? Please write me a few lines, and tell me how you are and what you are doing. I should also be so glad to hear something about H. Ernemann, in whose fate I felt much concerned this autumn when he was laid up at Frankfort, and of whom I have since heard nothing. Perhaps you could tell me something about him?

With the greatest esteem,

Ever yours most faithfully,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(19.) *To* HERR ADOLF BOETTGER, *Leipsic.*

(Translation.)

BERLIN, *December 10, 1841.*

HOCHGEEHRTER HERR,

Thank you sincerely for your kind letter, which I answer with all the frankness that an object of such great and immediate moment so emphatically demands, provided that it leads us to the end in view, and not

away from it. I have frequently thought over the subject of the Legend of St. Genoveva, which you propose, but have always been deterred from it by a certain passiveness in the character or at least in the action of the chief personage. By which I mean that our interest in Genoveva arises more from what she suffers and the way in which she suffers it, than from what she does, or from any dramatic business or action on her part. For her rejection of the importunities of her friend really forms only the starting point of the story, and is certainly not its chief motive, which lies in the suffering she undergoes; and therein I find—what shall I say?—something weak and passive, and in my judgment quite unfit for the material for an opera. I believe that this accounts for the non-success of several attempts to treat the subject. An Opera of that name was given here a short time\* since, and was not well received; chiefly, as I am informed, on account of the too uniformly elegiac character of the material. But perhaps you would treat the situations so as to give a different cast to all this? In that case I beg you to give me a very general outline of the way in which you would conceive the course of the business. But I can hardly

\* Schumann's "Genoveva" was completed in August 1848, and produced at the Leipsic theatre on June 25, 1850. The reference in the text is therefore to some other composition.

believe that even under the liveliest treatment any really active dramatic life could be thrown into the principal personage, or a really original and characteristic development given to the subordinate personages in the piece.

Waiting a reply at your convenience, and with great esteem,

I am, yours faithfully,  
FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

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(20.) *To* PROFESSOR WOLFGANG R. GRIEPENKERL,  
*Brunswick.\**

(Translation.)

BERLIN, *November 18, 1844.*

HOCHGEEHRTER HERR,

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 11th, from which, however, I regret to see that there has been some mistake. My brother-in-law told me a few weeks ago that you had written or were proposing to write a book for an Opera, and asked me if I felt inclined to set it to music. Although I cannot at present undertake an Opera on account of many other works in progress, I said to him that in any case it would interest me much

\* Autograph in the possession of William Mitchell, Esq.

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to make acquaintance with your poem, and that it would afford me great satisfaction if you were inclined to send me an Opera book.

To Shakespeare's "Tempest," as an Opera, I have, I confess, little inclination; nor does the destruction of Jerusalem—at least as I have hitherto seen it treated—appear to me fit for the Theatre. But the fact is that the whole matter depends more on the *how* than the *what*, and that no subject can be either accepted or rejected unconditionally. One important thing appears to me to be that the Composer and the Poet should meet, if only for a short time, so as to talk over and understand the thing. Without that I fear that there can be no real co-operation, and on this ground alone I should like very soon to meet you again.

Hoping that my wish may be fulfilled, and with much consideration,

Yours faithfully,

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

THE END.

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